

AGENDA SETTING AND POLITICAL DISCOURSE:
THE FRAMING OF POLITICAL CAMPAIGN REFORM IN 1999

BY

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Political campaign reform is an issue of great interest to many Americans. This dissertation examines the shaping of the political climate for the issue by applying first and second level agenda setting analysis. Content analysis was used as a method to procure the agendas of the media, public, and Congress. Articles from the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* were used to depict the media agenda. Speeches on the floor of the House and Senate portrayed the congressional agenda. Finally, messages from USENET on-line discussion groups represented the public agenda for the issue.

Data were accumulated regarding campaign reform for the 52 weeks of 1999. The frequency of emphasis in each agenda revealed first level effects in order to establish the direction of influence regarding the salience of the

issue. This examination was then expanded to include an analysis of the attributes used by each agenda to discuss the issue. Attributes were coded using a multidimensional framing approach. The dimensions included the sub-issues, affective, and cognitive elements used to frame the issue. The overall objective of the investigation was to capture a complete and accurate picture of the forces that sculpted the three agendas.

Autoregressive integrated moving averages (ARIMA) time series analysis was utilized as a statistical tool for modeling each univariate series of data. Cross-correlation analysis was then performed to examine the relationships among the agendas under scrutiny. A variety of significant effects were noted, but some underlying trends did emerge. Results suggest that the public have a powerful influence on the salience attributed to the issue of campaign reform by the Congress and the media. This influence persists with respect to the public agenda leading the media in their choice of attributes. The framing attributes used by the Congress are also notably influential in subsequent attributes used in media coverage for the issue. These findings both align and depart from past agenda setting research, but most assuredly shed light on the need for the future development of a multi-level approach to the study of agenda setting.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Overview

Freedom of Speech. Political Corruption. Incumbent Advantage. Soft Money. Issue Advocacy. Contribution Limits. These are all familiar terms in the on-going campaign reform debate. Discussion of such reform has permeated the mass media. With the increased attention afforded the issue in the 2000 election, campaign reform will likely persist in capturing the attention of journalists and Americans in general.

As with most public issues, campaign reform has many facets. Because of its controversial nature, the issue also maintains a wide variety of proponents. To understand the meaning of campaign reform and make an accurate judgment regarding its applicability in the political process, the general public must be adequately informed on the issue.

Often times, as Lippmann (1922) would suggest, when an individual desires information that is out of his realm of expertise or personal experience, he/she looks to media reports to build "a trustworthy picture inside his head of the world beyond his reach" (p.18). This is especially true for political issues (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1944; McCombs & Shaw,

1972; McCombs & Weaver, 1973; Weaver, McCombs & Spellman, 1975; Weaver & McCombs, 1978).

According to agenda setting literature, the salience attributed to issues in the media has a profound affect on those that audience members deem important (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Behr & Iyengar, 1985; Shaw & McCombs, 1989; Rogers, Dearing & Chang, 1991). The media, by emphasizing certain issues, tell people what to think about (Cohen, 1963).

Ideally, the mass media should provide its citizenry with a complete and accurate depiction of social issues that affect their everyday lives (Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes, & Sasson, 1992). Political consciousness should be stimulated with a wide variety of views and alternative voices. Although this is the ideal, most would agree that the American media often falls short. Media-generated images encourage the general public to construct meaning in a way that, as Gamson suggests (1992, p.374), "evinces the power and point of view of the political and economic elites who operate and focus it."

The organization of such information by the media and subsequent effects have astounded researchers for years (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1944; Klapper, 1960; McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Rogers & Dearing, 1987; McCombs & Evatt, 1995). The specific manner in which the construction of communication texts can influence individual cognition by selective focus is often referred to as framing and for many is considered the second level of agenda setting (McCombs & Evatt, 1995; Ghanem, 1996).

The theoretical premise for framing analysis can be found in both sociological and psychological research. Some view framing as the sociological process of constructing news, while others understand framing as the psychological dynamics of audience consumption (Goffman, 1974; Gittin, 1980; Tversky & Kahneman, 1982; Gamson & Lasch, 1983; Entman, 1991). Framing analysis moves beyond traditional agenda setting research in an effort to investigate the influence of media attributes on individuals. This second level of agenda setting provides a more detailed view of the "pictures in our heads" so eloquently mentioned by Lippmann (1922).

Research Purpose

It is the purpose of this study to investigate the effects of traditional agenda setting as well as second level agenda setting. The issue of political campaign reform will be analyzed. This issue has recently captured public and media attention and is sure to provide ample amounts of information for analysis. Specifically, data will be accumulated for the public, media, and congressional agendas.

The current study will utilize a variety of traditional as well as new methods to operationalize each agenda. The media agenda will be represented by news coverage in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. The public agenda will be represented by a pioneering analysis of Internet communication. The on-line discussion in USENET groups will be examined in order to provide a depiction of public opinion. The congressional agenda

will be represented by congressional speeches on the floor of the United States House and Senate. Content analysis will serve as an unobtrusive tool with which to investigate the agenda setting effects for each of these agendas.

The goal of this research is to better understand the transfer of salience with respect to the public, media, and congressional agendas. This includes the transfer of salience regarding which issues to think about as well as the transfer of salience regarding *how* to think about such issues. The campaign reform issue will be utilized in this analysis because of the heightened attention to the issue in recent months. The overall investigation is sure to provide a comprehensive assessment of the dynamic forces shaping the issue of political campaign reform.

Dissertation Outline

The following chapter will review pertinent literature in an effort to lay a foundation for the present research study. It will begin with an introduction to the basics of the campaign reform issue. This will serve as a starting point from which to begin a discussion of public opinion and the various sources that attempt to shape it. The theoretical background for agenda setting will then be provided. Specifically, the details involving the formation of the public, media, and policy agendas will be discussed. Next, the notion of issue attention and competition will be examined in an effort to highlight the importance of timing in agenda setting research. The second level of agenda

setting will then be introduced with its roots in framing analysis and references to psychological and sociological literature. The chapter will conclude with research questions detailing the expected relationships at both the first and second levels of agenda setting.

The third chapter will describe the methods chosen for the analysis. A discussion of each research question will be accompanied by a description and rationale for the chosen representation of each variable. The time frame for analysis will be discussed as well as the chosen method for examining the data.

The fourth chapter will present the findings of the research study. This will be followed by a final chapter that summarizes and details the implications of the findings for future study.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Campaign Reform

The American political system is firmly rooted in freedom and equality. The notion of "one person, one vote" is a valued American ideal. Since the appearance of political communities, money and politics have been firmly linked. While political equality is valued, the fact remains that money is not distributed equally. Achieving political equality in today's society relies a great deal on financial backing. Such dependence on money opens the door for financial power struggles and heated competition. Huge contributions and campaign expenditures along with thoughts of obligatory favoritism and abuses of power have led to an increased sense of worry in the minds of many Americans (Alexander, 1984). This, coupled with a decline in social capital and civic engagement, has led to a growing cynicism with American political figures and their campaigning behavior (Putnam, 1995).

President Kennedy was the first modern president to consider the problematic tactics used in political campaigning. In 1961, he appointed a bipartisan Commission on Campaign Costs to investigate existing behavior and legislation (Alexander, 1984). At this point, the reform era had begun, but did not climax until 1971 with the passage of the Federal Election Campaign

Act (FECA). This was the first comprehensive revision of federal campaign legislation since the Corrupt Practices Act of 1925. The act established a major turning point in the history of campaign finance reform. Among some of its provisions were limits on campaign media expenditures, limits on total candidate expenditures, contribution ceilings, and the requirement of disclosure reports detailing candidate funding, contributions, and expenditures. Amendments to the initial legislation were made in 1974, 1976, and 1979 to ensure that some segments of the legislation were not seen as inhibiting free speech or citizen participation. For example, in *Buckley vs. Valeo* (1976), the Supreme Court struck down the expenditure limitations, except for public financing in presidential elections, but upheld the contribution limits. Money spent is considered essential to political speech. The court established that spending money is speech and for this reason strict scrutiny must be given to any regulation of money contributed or spent in the political arena (Slabach, 1998).

Recent efforts have been made to overhaul the existing reform legislation with the addition of stricter, more comprehensive regulations. Reform advocates claim they are responding to a public cynicism that is permeating our democracy (McCain, 1999). They claim that money is not speech, but a medium of exchange which facilitates speech (Slabach, 1998). Campaign reform proponents have issued bills that call for campaign issue advertising

regulation, a ban on soft money, full disclosure of financial information, and voluntary personal spending limits (Common Cause, 1998).

Opposing activists maintain that campaign finance laws are a threat to the first amendment (Smith, 1997). They maintain that contributions are expressions of support for a candidate (Slabach, 1998). Such provisions stifle competition and perpetuate the status quo. Some argue that campaign finances are justifiably important to political campaigns, especially for non-incumbents (Jacobson, 1980).

The controversy over campaign reform is yet to be settled. One thing is certain: intense debate regarding the issue is sure to continue as Americans assert their views in the aftermath of the 2000 election dispute.

Public Opinion

Public opinion is a powerful force in today's society. To harness this power, one must be able to define it. In the era before 1937 one would have been inclined to define public opinion as the views on public affairs held by an integration of community notables (Converse, 1987). This view suggests that public opinion "transcends individual opinion and reflects an abstract, common good" (Price, 1992, p.11). With the onset of more efficient means of mass communication and increased literacy, today the perceived definition of public opinion has been able to reach new dimensions. With increased technology, researchers can tally individual opinions on issues that include all citizens with an equal measure. Thus public opinion is more ideally reflective

of a complete society. Although these measures are generally accepted in the research world, the precise nature of public opinion is still in many ways a mystery (Funkhouser, 1973). With many theories and suggestions given, no exclusively accepted definition of the term "public opinion" exists. This is not to say that public opinion is in any way meaningless. Its increased use in research of all kinds proves otherwise. We then must respect its many definitions with regard to different uses. Noelle-Neumann (1989, p.4) offers that "Public opinion is based on the unconscious striving of people living in a social unit to arrive at a common view, at the kind of agreement which is required to act and, if necessary, to make decisions." This denotation provides a comprehensive and concise definition of the term and will be used in the present study. In order to understand the complete process of public opinion formation with respect to issues, it is useful to analyze the agenda setting process.

Agenda Setting

Agenda setting research investigates the transfer of issue salience from one agenda to another. An issue can be conceptualized as something in dispute that offers multiple points of view (Becker, 1991). The agendas most often analyzed include the public agenda, the media agenda, and the policy agenda. Much research in agenda setting has attempted to include the interplay of all three factors (Gonzenbach, 1992; Jablonski & Bichard, 1997). With reference to these three agendas, Kosicki (1993, p. 101) notes that

"each part of the process is incomplete and somewhat unsatisfying by itself, but that by combining all three perspectives, the field can come closer to what a solid contemporary model of media influence ought to be." Many scholars agree that such an effort will help students and researchers to more clearly appreciate the connection between journalists, sources, public, and policy (McCombs, 1981, 1992; McCombs & Gilbert, 1986; Protess & McCombs, 1991). Integrating the relationship among all three agendas provides a more complete view of the agenda setting process. Agenda setting historically originates with the investigation of the public agenda.

The Public Agenda

Much of the world remains out of reach for the average person. Therefore, when an individual desires information that is out of his/her realm of experience, he/she looks to the media to "make for himself a trustworthy picture inside his head of the world beyond his reach" (Lippmann, 1922, p.18). For this reason, many issues which concern the public are in a large part determined by topics that are served to us by the media (Mackuen, 1981). Funkhouser (1973, p.74) likens our attention to the media to playing a "crooked roulette wheel because it's the only wheel in town." The media-world experience must suffice because it is our only way of knowing what is happening in the world outside our immediate observation (Zucker, 1978). Without the use of the media by policy officials the government would have no way to communicate with the public. Information is vital for public and private

life, therefore, the modern world would be frightening without the media (Graber, 1980). Lippmann suggests that as events occur, the media focus on them and thus affect the formation of the public agenda.

Early mass communication scholars began to study the effects of the media on public opinion change with little significant results. As they looked for the persuasive effects and came up short, the period became known as the "limited effects" era (Klapper, 1960). Many became discouraged and left the field (Beniger, 1987). Just when it seemed that the study of media effects was futile, communication researchers made a rediscovery. They began to approach media effects from a new angle.

New research efforts indicated that the media may not be successful in changing opinions or "telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about" (Cohen, 1963, p.13). This twist focuses attention away from persuasion onto something clearly different. It suggests that although opinions are not formed or changed by the mass media, public agendas are set by the mass media. This move toward a new cognitive factor has intrigued researchers ever since.

What is an agenda? Rogers and Dearing (1987, p.556) define an agenda as "a list of issues and events that are viewed at a point in time as ranked in a hierarchy of importance." The first researchers to use the phrase "agenda-setting" were McCombs and Shaw (1972). They studied the effects of the mass media on the public's political perceptions. Evidence showed that

voters tend to share common ideas on what is politically important with those stressed in the media.

The Media's Influence

The discussion of the media's political influence is not a new one. Several researchers in the "limited effects" era drew similar conclusions. A study by Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet (1944) found a mobilizing effect of the media during a political campaign. However, it appears that interpersonal communication had more influence than the media on opinion formation. This indicates a "two-step" flow of communication from opinion leaders to the general public regarding the political issues. Opinion leaders appear to have more exposure to mass media, which they then pass along to less widely exposed publics (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955). Interpersonal communication and social interaction therefore play a large role in the public agenda setting process (McLeod, Becker, & Byrnes, 1974; Wanta & Wu, 1992; Zhu, Watt, Snyder, Yan, & Jiang, 1993). In 1983 Noelle-Neumann developed a Strength of Personality (SP) scale to identify such influential opinion leaders. Brosius and Weimann (1996) tested the theory and found that those who ranked high on the scale were more likely to diffuse media information to the general public. This suggests that the media have the power to reach even those who do not watch, read, or listen. As Klapper (1960, p.30) states, "The common social habit of telling friends about mass communications which they may

themselves have missed appears likely to supplement the reinforcing capabilities of the original communications."

The Influence of Individual Characteristics

Several personality and lifestyle factors may also affect the reasons why some are more attuned or interested in the stories covered by the media. Agenda-setting effects have proven greater among individuals who were highly interested in an election, yet still uncertain in their choice of a candidate (McCombs & Weaver, 1973; Weaver, McCombs & Spellman, 1975; Mackuen & Coombs, 1981). This suggests that the media may serve as a point of orientation for individuals who feel disconnected with current issues. This function of the media promotes a sense of participation for consumers. In a time when the traditional roles of families are changing, some may turn to the mass media as an impersonal social tie to the community (Ball-Rokeach & Defleur, 1976). These findings agree with those of Blumler (1969), who proposed that audience orientations and motives influence and predict their media attentiveness. He suggests that different audience members are oriented to the mass media in different ways because of their unique personality dispositions and social circumstances. Blumler (1969) suggests that these orientations fall into three basic categories: cognitive (surveillance, vote guidance seeking, and reality exploration), diversion (entertainment, excitement), and personal identity needs (reinforcement, salience of personal experiences). Similarly, McGuire (1974, p.182) argues that "mass

communications offer a wide range of gratifications in the form or content that is perceived as instructive regarding how to live, how to manage, what is happening, and what it means." The motivations of the individual may provide insight into the probability of media induced agenda setting effects. These effects may be contingent on an individual's need both for orientation and gratification (Chaffee, 1973).

Education level may also have an effect on the agenda setting process. There is probably no single variable as influential with respect to agenda setting effects as education level (Converse, 1972). It may be suggested that the educated citizen is more sophisticated and critical. Well-educated individuals appear to show more selectivity in their media choices (Park & Kosicki, 1995). Perhaps then, their views are less influenced by the agenda setting efforts of the media (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Hill, 1985). This acknowledgment that all individuals are uniquely affected according to subjective experience suggests that the public must be disaggregated by attributes as much as possible in research situations (Rogers & Dearing, 1987).

In addition to uniquely affecting individuals in the public sector with respect to certain issues, the media may also influence an individual's inclination to speak up or keep quiet about issues. The spiral of silence suggests that individuals desire social approval and will not speak out if their views differ from that of the masses. Noelle-Neumann proposes that "To the individual,

not isolating himself is more important than his own judgment" (1974, p.43). Perhaps it is a widely accepted belief that the media agenda reflects the views of the majority. Therefore, those with a strong desire to conform will adhere to the saliency of the issues served to them by the media. This would then inhibit interpersonal flow of alternate media issues because of the fear of isolation.

The Influence of Issue Characteristics

Different issues in themselves may be characterized by their own unique agenda setting dynamics. Some issues are more easily conceptualized. Concrete issues require less cognitive development and possess less inertia, thus increasing the probability of agenda setting effects. On the other hand, ambiguous issues are unpredictable, difficult to visualize, and thus presumably less susceptible to the power of agenda setting (Yagade & Dozier, 1990; Protess, Cook, Curtin, Gordon, Leff, McCombs, & Miller, 1987). Abstract issues may be hard for the public to comprehend and identify with, therefore making it difficult to attribute salience. This contrast between abstract and concrete issues is a significant one, yet it is often difficult to operationalize. After all, perceptions of issues in this manner are varied because they lie within the eye of the beholder.

Another factor of notable importance is that of issue obtrusiveness. The obtrusiveness of an issue is the degree to which an issue forces itself into the direct experience of individuals (Yagade & Dozier, 1990). Past research

shows that the more real world experience an individual has with an issue the less likely agenda setting effects will be present (Winter & Eyal, 1981; Weaver, 1987). Thus, it appears that "the less information and sensitivity the public has to an issue prior to its treatment in the media, the more likely it is to be influenced by subsequent media reports" (Leff, Protess, & Brooks, 1986, p.311). Although this suggestion has been noted by several researchers, some have neglected to find stronger media effects for unobtrusive over more obtrusive issues (Demers, Craff, Choi, & Pessin, 1989). Erbring, Goldenberg, and Miller (1980) have even suggested that personal experience may enhance media effects. Certain issues may be primed by real world interaction, stimulating media interest. Demers (1996) found that personal interaction within a community actually predicted greater newspaper reading in that community. Whichever the case may be, there are indications that the obtrusiveness of an issue influences the public perception of that issue.

The Real World Influence

Another factor contributing to the formation of the public agenda involves the actual events that occur in our daily environment. There is the possibility that what researchers mistake for an agenda setting effect may essentially be nothing more than the media and the public responding in concert to real-world events (Iyengar, 1988; Mackuen, 1981; Funkhouser, 1973). This type of confounding variable, if not accounted for, can be very troubling for researchers. Behr and Iyengar (1985) found that real world conditions

directly affected the economic issue of unemployment as well as complementing the media regarding other topics. Mackuen and Coombs (1981) proposed similar results with regard to economic issues.

Funkhouser's (1973) study of several issues of the 1960's proposed a limited role of agenda setting by real world indicators. He found several cases in which the public agenda did not comply with real world indicators, yet it closely paralleled the media agenda. Beniger (1978) found that media coverage superseded social indicators in setting the public agenda. It has even been suggested that the media agenda bears no resemblance to the real world, yet has more powerful effects when determining the public agenda (Hester & Gonzenbach, 1994). Davis (1952) found that crime depictions in the Colorado area were not correlated with actual crime occurrences. It seems as though the media have the ability to create crime related fears with excessive coverage. Einsiedel, Salomone, and Schneider (1984) found that fear of victimization is better predicted by media exposure than by actual experience with crime. Individuals who pay more attention to televised news about crime are more fearful of crime related incidents (O'Keefe & Reid-Nash, 1987). Fishman (1981) described the creation of an actual "crime wave" by the newspapers in New York City. This study indicated that the way in which the news was organized and selected affected the public's perception of the crime issue. Overall, it is evident that the real world measure of an issue

should be taken into account when researching who and what influence the public agenda.

The media have a lofty responsibility to the American consumer. Some feel as though it is the job of the media to use their agenda setting influence to inform voters about candidates, issues, and images during elections (Weaver & McCombs, 1978). This information may promote awareness, but not necessarily knowledge. As Yankelovich (1985, p.18) states, "It maximizes public awareness and public ignorance at the same time. To be excited about an issue but fail to think it through makes for the worst kind of citizen." The media's role may be one of civic mobilization (Shaw & McCombs, 1989). They help to focus attention on key issues in need of public action. It is unclear and uncertain what the ideal role of the media should include. Ultimately, it is up to the consumer to use the information they deem salient to take responsible action.

The Influence of Policymakers

The media are but one of the many factors that affect the agenda formation of the American public. Policy officials may also have an effect upon what the public decides to focus attention. This effect is often filtered through the media (Cohen, 1965). Roberts (1992) found that voting behavior may even be predicted by political issue attention in the media. Domke, Fan, Fibison, Shah, Smith, and Watts (1997) noted an agenda setting influence of candidate coverage on subsequent public opinion toward candidates in the

1996 presidential election. Clearly, politicians strenuously attempt to control their coverage by the media. They conveniently distance themselves from negative coverage and associate themselves with positive stories. This shows an attempt to reap the political benefits of agenda setting (Iyengar, 1988). It is the desire of political hopefuls that positive media exposure will result in positive rapport with the American public.

Many researchers have found that the president has a significant influence on the public agenda as well (Gonzenbach, 1992; Chaffee, 1978). Behr and Iyengar (1985, p.52) proclaim that "When the president speaks, the public listens." Political leaders are very powerful figures in the public agenda setting arena, but it is evident that not one factor alone shapes the agenda of the American public. The media, the president, the real world events, as well as personality and other unique factors all contribute to the formation of the public agenda.

The Media Agenda

In order to fully understand the agenda setting process, one cannot simply investigate the media's effect on public opinion. The formation of the media agenda itself must be accounted for. It is impossible to systematically study the rise of a given public issue without some understanding of these behind-the-scenes processes (Kosicki, 1993). An evaluation of the factors that promote the formation of the media agenda are key in understanding how particular issues are framed and offered to the public.

The Public's Influence

It has been asserted that the media affect the public agenda, but the public may also have an effect on the formation of the media agenda. This idea of bi-directional agenda setting predicts that stories in the mass media may reflect a previous demonstration of interest in the public agenda. A number of researchers have found evidence in support of such a relationship (Watt & van den Berg, 1978, 1981; Behr & Iyengar, 1985; Weaver, 1987). Gonzenbach (1992) noted that the public agenda filters into the media agenda with regards to the drug issue. This suggests that consumers may very well affect media coverage. Some newspapers have even asked readers for input regarding coverage as a way to promote public journalism (Shepard, 1994). Rogers and Dearing (1987, p.571) concluded that there is a "two-way, mutually dependent relationship between the public agenda and the media agenda in the agenda-setting process." Erbring, Goldenberg, and Miller (1980) characterized this two-way relationship by emphasizing that the media agenda is set by the public in a gradual process whereas the media's effect on the public agenda is accelerated and more direct. The media seem to have a general idea regarding the interests of their audience. It would seem only natural then that coverage would reflect consumer demand in some cases. Distorted amounts of crime coverage have been shown to exist because of this need to pacify consumer demand (Graber, 1979). Stories might also reflect the media's desire to attract attention, therefore gaining

readers/viewers. Such stories play upon sensationalism, deviance, and tragedy. Ultimately, it is clear that the media are likely to cover issues they believe are of consequence to their audience (Carter, Stamm, & Heintz-Knowles, 1992).

The Influence of Policymakers

The public is certainly not the only factor influencing the media agenda. The president and various other policy elites affect the issues that appear on the media agenda as well. Walker (1977, p.433) stated that "for three safety related issues, the agenda of the U.S. Senate set the agenda for the New York Times." The most evident effects ultimately come from the president's agenda. Presidential activity can be said to cause a flurry of media activity (Behr & Iyengar, 1985). The president has the power to mobilize the media agenda merely by talking about an issue (Rogers, Dearing, & Chang, 1991). Wanta and Foote (1994) found this to be true for President George Bush with respect to issues on which he was an important source.

Even those who have not yet made it to the White House may affect the mass media agenda. Iyengar and Kinder (1987) recognize that candidates for public office often go to extraordinary lengths to "make news." Roberts and McCombs (1994) found that political campaigns were instrumental in setting the media agenda during the 1990 Texas gubernatorial election. It appears that the media are at least somewhat influenced by the agendas of policy elites.

The Influence of Media Convergence

Media agendas may also be formed in part by other media. Influential media have been identified as a major factor influencing the news media agenda (Danielian & Reese, 1989). This influence of media organizations on each other is termed "intermedia agenda setting" or "media convergence" (Danielian & Reese, 1989; Roberts & McCombs, 1994; Roberts, 1997). Too much sameness in media content may conflict with the American value of presenting diverse views and voices (Reese & Danielian, 1989). For this reason, media convergence is a topic of important study.

McCombs and Shaw (1972), in their trailblazing study in agenda setting research, noted a striking similarity in related media coverage. Their results implied that a consensus on major news items might exist. McCombs and Shaw (1972), along with numerous researchers in the field, have asserted that the two leading sources for such an effect appear to be *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Gans, 1979; Danielian & Reese, 1989; Shaw & McCombs, 1989). It has been said that when entertaining story ideas, editors will read the *Times* and *Post* to review the manner in which their editors cover a story (Gans, 1979). Ultimately, Gans (1979) notes that it is the "*New York Times* that is used as the final arbiter of quality and professionalism, across journalistic formats" (p.181). Evidence of prior publication eliminates the need for an independent decision (Gans, 1979). As Sigal (1973) notes, "The consensible nature of news may

even impede the breaking of stories that lack corroboration from opinion-leading newspapers" (p.40). Consistency often implies accuracy. Breed (1980) describes the phenomenon of one newspaper leading others as a "dendritic" catalyst (p.195). Just as the dendritic nerve cells carry impulses to the cell body, the influence of larger papers flows down to the smaller ones.

More recently, Protess, Leff, Brooks, and Gordon (1985) found a similar effect. Their research revealed that investigative stories regarding rape in *The Chicago Sun-Times* promoted increases in subsequent stories on the same topic. Reese and Danielian (1989) detected media convergence in their investigation of media coverage of the drug issue in the mid-1980's. Their research revealed that the *New York Times* took the lead in covering the cocaine issue, with the *Washington Post* following close behind. Other papers quickly fell in line and picked up the story and expanded upon it. Danielian and Reese (1989) note that such convergence in the media most often occurs "when a story is breaking, when coverage is at its peak, and when a story comes from a national or international source" (p.63). It is in these situations that news media cover a breaking story in a similar fashion.

In Rogers, Dearing, and Chang's (1991) study of the AIDS issue, the mass media actually suppressed stories regarding the issue until it was picked up by the *New York Times*. Once the issue finally made it onto the media agenda, the national media analyzed were found to be highly correlated in their coverage (Rogers, Dearing, & Chang, 1991). Roberts and McCombs

(1994) discovered that even political advertisements exert an influence on newspaper and television coverage for political issues. They also confirmed an agenda setting influence of newspapers on subsequent television coverage. A replication of Roberts and McCombs study by Lopez-Escobar, Llamas, McCombs, and Lennon (1998) found similar results. Their results suggest an intermedia influence of newspaper coverage on the issues and attributes covered on television. Bichard (1999) noted a convergence of national media sources regarding the recent advancements and issues surrounding genetic cloning. Clearly, numerous media channels play a potential role in intermedia agenda setting.

Interactive processes among various media, sources, and news organizations understandably influence the media agenda (Rogers, Dearing, & Bregman, 1993). Various peers in the newsroom or press pack might also have an effect. This is especially true when issues are given a cynical slant (Starobin, 1995). This type of peer pressure has been noted by ABC reporter John Quinones (Diamond, Accosta, & Thornton, 1987, p.10) who made the statement that "sometimes we have a tendency to feed on one another." With the pressure of determining which stories are newsworthy, it may be easy to follow along with the ideas put forth by your peers. It takes a courageous journalist to challenge the norms created by the group (Shaw & McCombs, 1989).

The Real World Influence

Media coverage is at least partially determined by events in the real world (Funkhouser, 1973). Behr and Iyengar (1985) found this to be veritable of the television media agenda with regard to the issues of energy, unemployment, and inflation. Shaw and McCombs (1989) also detected that real world events affected story choices by journalists regarding the drug issue. Rogers, Dearing, and Chang (1991) discovered that many events precluded the mass media response to the AIDS issue. The most notable of those events included actor Rock Hudson's announcement that he had AIDS and the story of young Ryan White. Media coverage is said to have elevated at least ten-fold after these events took place. Rogers et al. (p.41), state that "The personification of the AIDS disease by White and Hudson has its primary impact in changing the meaning of the issue for media newspeople, who then responded with more attention to AIDS." This resemblance to the real world suggests that television coverage at least partially attempts to echo the actual state of the nation.

The many factors contributing to the formation of the media agenda provide a useful picture of how issues are offered to the public. The ways in which these various factors contribute to how members of the public view issues will be an interesting topic of study for years to come.

The Policy Agenda

Polymakers and governing officials also play a dynamic role in the agenda setting process. Items on the policy agenda or platform affect the political climate of the nation. How does an issue get on the policy agenda? Rogers and Dearing (1987) suggest two possible answers: 1) The public agenda, once set by, or reflected by, the media agenda, influences the policy agenda of elite decision makers, and, in some cases, policy implementations; and, 2) the media agenda seems to have direct, sometimes strong, influence upon the policy agenda of elite decision makers and, in some cases, policy implementation. It can be assumed that the Founding Fathers of our nation expected a substantial amount of constituency influence over the governing body. Burke's (Eulau & Wahlke, 1959) conception of this influence implies that the government should serve constituency's interests, but not its will. Many researchers have found such an influence. Page and Shapiro (1983) found a substantial causal correlation between public opinion and policy formation. Converse (1987) found that public opinion not only affected policy-making, but affected the presidential agenda as well. Gonzenbach (1992) found analogous results in his study concerning the drug issue.

When considering policy agenda formation as a result of public concern, one might surmise that the sources communicating such concerns play a large role in the agenda setting process. In effect, the media may serve as the instrument through which public concern is crystallized in an attempt to

promote policy action. Shaw and McCombs (1989, p.118) clarify that "it is not the job of the news media to create social policy," but their agenda setting role provides an advantageous avenue through which the public and policymakers can be directed. Cohen (1965) may have captured the essence of this relationship best in his comparison of the media to the bloodstream in the human body. As our blood links the various parts of our body together, so does the media as it supplies us with political and intellectual nourishment.

Numerous studies have indicated that the media have a significant effect on policy formation (Jones, 1976; Iyengar, 1988; Lambeth, 1978; Pritchard & Berkowitz, 1993). Linsky (1986) found that a high percentage of policy-makers admit such an influence from the mass media. In a study of media influence on prosecutors, Pritchard (1986) found that news media coverage was taken into careful consideration when deciding whether to engage in plea negotiations. Prosecutors were less inclined to plea bargain if a case had received news coverage. Policy allocation of funds can also be affected by the amount of media coverage on a topic. Pritchard and Berkowitz (1993) found that media coverage of the crime issue was a strong predictor of subsequent resource appropriation. The presidential policy agenda is also affected by the media agenda (Gonzenbach, 1992; Jablonski & Gonzenbach, 1996). Wanta and Foote (1994) discovered that the President may use the media as a reference for which to decide which social problems are important to the American public. When operationalizing the policy agenda one must

be careful to distinguish between policy views and policy action. Proress, et al. (1987) found that the media affected attitude change of policymakers, yet policy action was more attributed to journalistic lobbying. Several other studies have also proposed that this active collaboration between journalists and policymakers often result in policy change (Cook, et al., 1983; Leff, et al., 1986). The news media are believed by many people to be a reliable source of public concern. Policymakers often judge public sentiment directly from mass media suggestion. Overall, policymakers are very attentive to the public and media agenda when formulating the policy agenda.

The Issue Attention Cycle

Irrespective of how each of the agendas are formed, overall American sentiment rarely stays focused on any one issue for very long. This may be due to the vast amount of issues available to us. Miller (1965) suggests that the number of issues that can secure our attention at one time is relatively limited to seven, plus or minus two. Issues must then compete for our attention (Lippmann, 1922; Hilgartner & Bosk, 1988). This has been called the "zero-sum" principle (Zhu, 1992). The addition of any new issue on an agenda is at the expense of another issue. It has even been suggested that certain noteworthy events will create "killer" issues that have the power to move other issues off the agenda almost instantly (Brosius & Kepplinger, 1995). Lippmann (1922) provides the example of a cue ball striking the end of a contiguous row of other billiard balls, it stops and another flies off the far

end of the row. In a like manner, the news, real world events, personality factors, and other factors, constantly have a dynamic competitive effect upon the public, media, and policy agendas. When an issue does secure a position on one of the various agendas, it is often short lived. Issues that remain prominent for a time inevitably wear thin and succumb to America's limited attention span (Zucker, 1978). This process appears to follow a cycle.

Downs' (1972) termed it an "issue-attention cycle" and asserts that issues reflecting three specific characteristics are highly apt to follow such a cycle. First, a minority of the general public is suffering from the problem. Second, the distress incurred by such a problem results from actions that afford substantial benefit to a majority or a powerful minority of the population. And, third, the problem is not intrinsically stimulating in a sustained way. When a situation containing these three characteristics has captured the public eye, it is likely to move through the "issue-attention cycle."

The cycle itself contains four stages, which may vary in duration, but most often occur in the sequence that follows. The cycle begins with the existence of a social concern or problematic issue. At this point the issue has not yet seized public attention so it is labeled the *pre-problem stage*. As a result of some dramatic series of events, or for other reasons, the public then experiences a sudden surge of attention towards the problem. This attention is coupled with alarm and euphoric enthusiasm about society's ability to "solve the problem" or "do something effective." This stage of the cycle is

entitled the *discovery stage*. Eventually there is a gradual realization that the problem cannot be solved easily and that solving it will be rather costly. This leads into the third stage of the cycle, which is labeled the *plateau stage*. People then inevitably become discouraged, threatened, and bored by the issue. Public desire to keep focused on the issue subsides. It is then that the issue reaches the final stage entitled the *decline stage*. The problem still exists, as well as various policy measures enacted in the previous stages, but public attention has migrated elsewhere from lack of interest.

Issue Dynamics and Competition

Following Downs' lead, several authors have since attempted to investigate the individual characteristics and issue dynamics that play a role in the competition for attention in different arenas. Competing trends are an important factor when analyzing issue attention. The unique environments within which issues compete are critical in understanding how trends are ultimately defined. It is useful to understand the competition that occurs between issues in the public environment. Ball-Rokeach and DeFluer (1976) note the effects of issues in our environment with relation to a "dependency model." This model asserts that individual social settings will affect personal dependency on the media. For this reason, those in an environment lacking information pay more attention to issues covered by the mass media. This is most evident with respect to political issues. To the extent that an individual is dependent on media depictions of issues, they will pay more attention to

that information. Nimmo (1978) went on to examine the types of political issues in the media that acquire increased attention. He found that new, unstructured, remote issues that appeal to emotional cues and depict people as issues were the most popular. He attributes such an effect to a shift in the public's political processing from being characterized as interested, knowledgeable, motivated, and democratic to a more disinterested, uninformed, and emotion-bound public.

Various issues compete in the struggle for public attention. Hilgartner and Bosk (1988) propose that many social problems are defined differently with respect to their unique environments or arenas. Issues that survive are most often promoted by operatives with perceived credibility. The process can take years of promotion and interaction between arenas of discourse or it can occur almost instantly, but often the survival of one issue is at the expense of others. This dissolution factor increases competition. Some other variables that Hilgartner and Bosk (1988) propose to be determinants of attention include feedback and carrying capacity. Carrying capacity refers to the number of issues that can sustain salience at one point in time. They did not empirically test these assertions, but their guidance is undoubtedly appreciated and represented in future research.

Neuman (1990) investigated the threshold of public and media attention to social issues. He examined the existence of a normally distributed logistic curve corresponding to a theory of public attention resulting from agenda

setting by the media. He described various stages necessary in the formation of public attention. These are reminiscent of some of the earlier mentions of collective behavior (Foote & Hart, 1953; Davison, 1958; Blumer, 1969).

Neuman makes an interesting comparison to advertising in his attempt to explain lack of attention and issue dissolution. He proposes a "saturation effect." This occurs when a "unit increase in media attention no longer corresponds to an increase in public response" (Neuman, 1990, p. 162).

Advertisers refer to such an effect as "ad wear-out" (Naples, 1979). When this "wear-out" or "saturation" occurs, the issue is often replaced by new, more interesting, and current issues. Neuman (1990) shows evidence to support the existence of a curvilinear logistic relationship between the volume of media coverage and the level of public concern.

Brosius and Kepplinger (1995) also noted a correlation between media and public attention to issues. They investigated the effects of "killer" and "victim" issues. They note that an unexpected, surprising, or otherwise noteworthy event can kill existing issues by instantly moving into their position on an agenda. These "killer" issues are most likely to include information that is threatening, personally relevant, knowledgeable, or of symbolic value. Brosius and Kepplinger (1995) noted a "killer" effect from the issues of public security and energy. In their analysis, these issues were so dominant that they knocked several other issues off the public agenda. Their results confirmed the existence of both categories of issues, yet explained that the

process is very complex and other factors may also be contributors. With future study, expanded components of issue competition must be examined in order to arrive at predictions regarding the impact of social issues.

Similarly, Zhu (1992) asserts that issue competition will always lead to the dissolution of some issue or issues. He proposes the existence of a zero-sum theory with relation to issue competition and attention. Zhu proposes that the promotion of any new issue causes the demise of another. Perhaps this occurs as a result of limited capacity. When the capacity is full, new issues must push old ones aside to gain an audience. McCombs (1995a) found similar results in their analysis of agenda-carrying capacity, agenda-diversity, and issue volatility. The study spanned a period of 40 years and showed no significant linear increase in the public agenda's carrying capacity. However, results did indicate that over the past 40 years there has been an increase in both agenda diversity and issue volatility. According to McCombs (1995a), the absence of an increased carrying capacity, coupled with increases in the diversity of issues and volatility, "leads to a faster rate of issue turnover on the public agenda." For this reason, issue operatives must strategically promote a limited amount of issues or attempt to "chunk" items together in a memorable way. Politicians have grasped this approach very effectively.

The foundation of past research regarding patterns of attention and issue competition contributes to a more holistic view of the forces driving Downs' conceptualization of "issue-attention cycles." Issue attention and competition

are vital factors in the overall dynamic of agenda setting. American public, media, and policy agendas are all undoubtedly affected by this climate of attention and competition. The evolution of an issue may also have a direct effect on the media's chosen frame of reference. Further discussion of such an effect can be noted in the following section regarding a new dimension of agenda setting labeled framing.

Framing

Recently, the traditional agenda setting model has broadened to include a second level. The agenda setting model is no longer limited to the study of issue salience. As McCombs (1981; McCombs & Evatt, 1995) states, "in addition to providing cues about the salience of topics —objects, if you will- the mass media differentiate between the saliency of various attributes of these topics or objects" (p.134). Attributes can be described as the qualities and characteristics that define an object (McCombs & Ghanem, 1998). McCombs (1992) further stresses that "both the selection of topics for the news agenda and the selection of frames for stories about those topics are powerful agenda setting roles" (p.8-9). The ability of the media to frame issues is now of great concern to researchers. By framing issues, the media not only tell us what to think about, but also how to think about it. The framing concept specifically focuses on the manner in which the construction of communication texts influences individual cognitions by selectively focusing on particular parts of reality while ignoring or downplaying other aspects (Shah, Domke &

Wackman, 1996). Framing contributes to agenda setting theory by analyzing the content of issues in more depth. After all, as Kosicki (1993) notes, "*agenda* implies more than a simple list of topics" (p. 115).

The theoretical underpinnings for framing research rests in both sociological and psychological literature. Although both use the term "framing" and share the idea that a frame is the perspective a person applies to define an issue or event, they differ in their application (Takeshita, 1997).

The sociological perspective owes much to the work of Goffman (1974). His approach assumes that individuals classify and interpret life experiences in order to make sense of them. Social frames help us to "locate, perceive, identify, and label" information (Goffman, 1974, p.21). This perspective provides a vehicle in studying the mass media and issue framing. According to Gitlin (1980), media frames are "persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis and exclusion, by which symbol handlers routinely organize discourse" (p.7). He looked at the effects of framing with relation to media coverage of the 'students for a democratic society.' Gamson (1988) took up the study of media framing and the interaction among audience members and media content. He describes sets of issues in the media as "issue packages" (Gamson & Lasch, 1983; Gamson, 1988; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). As Gamson and Modigliani (1989) describe, "A package has an internal structure. At its core is a central organizing idea, or frame, for making sense of relevant events, suggesting

what is at issue" (p.3). Gamson identifies five devices that signify the usage of frames: metaphors, exemplars, catchphrases, depictions, and visual images (Gamson & Lasch, 1983; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). These frames influence the way audience members organize information.

The most prominent views on framing in psychological literature began with the research of Tversky and Kahneman (1981,1982). According to their experimental studies, the cognitive perception of problems and evaluations produce predictable shifts of preference depending on how a message is framed. The representation of information affects judgment. This would be applicable to polling situations in which the wording of questions might exert influence on respondent choices (Takeshita, 1997). Iyengar (1991) has looked at this with respect to the news media and their depictions of issues such as poverty and crime. A series of experiments demonstrated that differences in the framing of such problems influenced people's perceptions of who was responsible.

The concepts studied in framing research can be found in mass communication literature even before the term "framing" was applied. Many traditional media studies in agenda setting went beyond merely investigating issue salience (Benton & Frazier, 1976; Becker & McCombs, 1978; Weaver, Graber, McCombs & Eyal, 1981). Framing analysis has since been utilized by mass communication scholars, with many linking the sociological and

psychological origins to provide an integrated analysis of framing effects (Entman, 1993, Pan & Kosicki, 1993).

Pan and Kosicki (1993) offer a model for analyzing news discourse with relation to sources, journalists, and audience members. The goal of this integration is to develop a way to "view news texts as a system of organized signifying elements that both indicate the advocacy of certain ideas and provide devices to encourage certain kinds of audience processing" (p.55-56). The structure of news discourse offers the following devices: syntactical structure, script structure, thematic structure, and rhetorical structure. A combination of what we learn about how the media operate in society and how media producers and consumers process information is necessary in order to fully understand the complete agenda setting process (Lasorsa, 1997). The overlapping of the concepts from these two disciplines suggest that frames function as both "internal structures of the mind" and "devices embedded in political discourse" (Kinder & Sanders, 1990, p.74).

Recent efforts in framing research have focused on defining and applying the term to mass communication and developing methods for analyzing framing attributes. Entman (1993) describes how framing offers an avenue for which to study the power of communication texts. In his assessment, frames serve the following functions in the communication process: "define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies" (p.52). Iyengar and Simon (1993) connect qualitative features of news

reporting on the Gulf Crisis to public opinion regarding the issue. They discuss the media's use of both "episodic" and "thematic" frames (p.369). Episodic frames depict public issues through concrete and specific events. They usually contain visual appeal and include live on-the-scene coverage. Thematic frames place public issues in an abstract or more general context (Iyengar, 1991; Iyengar & Simon, 1993). They are more interpretive and focus on general outcomes or conditions. Results suggested that the television coverage of the Gulf Crisis was predominantly episodic and that "the pattern of episodic framing induced individuals to express greater support for a military as opposed to a diplomatic resolution of the crisis" (p. 366). Iyengar and Simon's frame distinctions, along with the inclusion of both media and audience perceptions, provides a useful example of how to integrate the psychological and sociological perspectives.

Kosicki (1993) discusses framing research as a necessary addition to the traditional agenda setting paradigm because of its attempt to penetrate the "shell of the topic" (p. 112). Issues need the in-depth analysis that framing analysis can offer. He asserts that the future of agenda setting scholarship should go beyond issue saliency and into developing a more complete understanding of how various factors shape and engage public opinion.

The many facets of framing analysis are discussed in length by Scheufele (1996, 1999). A systematic overview of framing research is given to offer insight into the task of clarifying and categorizing framing literature. A four-

cell typology of frames is suggested using frames as both dependent and independent variables for analyzing both the media and individuals. Possible operationalizations of each cell are discussed. Scheufele offers that "In order to fully explain and describe the influences and effects of framing in the field of mass media effects research, all four cells have to be part of an exhaustive concept explication on framing" (1996, p.9). A combination of methods that includes both the individual as well as the mass media will provide a more complete picture of the framing process.

An illuminating description of this second level agenda setting can be found in Ghanem's (1997) recent depiction of framing research. She espouses McCombs and Evatt's (1995) idea that first level agenda setting is concerned with "objects" while second level agenda setting (framing) is concerned with the "attributes" of objects. Ghanem views framing analysis, not as a shift away from, but a way to build upon existing agenda setting research. In her words, "It is one highway linking up with another major thoroughfare" (Ghanem, 1997, p. 4). She discusses the original agenda setting hypothesis along with two additional framing hypotheses. The first hypothesis investigates the traditional first level effect of the media's attention to issues and subsequent public concern. The second hypothesis deals with the second level of agenda setting (framing) and "illustrates the influence of attribute salience on how people think about an object on the agenda" (p.4). The final hypothesis illustrates the influence of attributes in media coverage

on the salience of issues on the public agenda. This influence of second level media frames on first level public salience is termed "compelling arguments" (McCombs, 1996; Ghanem, 1996, 1997). Figure 1 provides a depiction of these relationships.

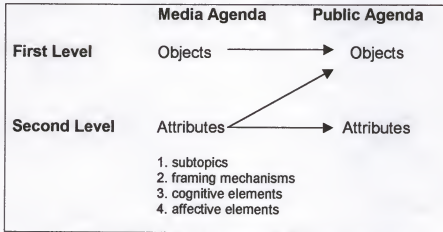


Figure 1: Two Levels of Agenda Setting (Ghanem, 1997)

The examination of framing effects is best understood as a multidimensional representation. The interplay among various elements contributing to the dominant frame must not be overlooked (Hendrickson, 1995). Ghanem (1997) refers to the metaphor of a "picture frame" in her conceptualization of framing attributes (p.10). In order to measure these attributes, she offers four major dimensions: 1- the subtopics of a news item (what is included in the picture frame), 2- presentation or framing mechanisms (size and placement of the frame), 3- cognitive attributes (details of what is included in the frame), and 4- affective attributes (tone of the

picture). These four dimensions provide a comprehensive method for analyzing a variety of issues and topics (See Figure 1).

Framing Dimensions

The multidimensional aspect of issue frames takes into account the various layers that must be peeled away in order to analyze agenda setting effects. Each layer contains a unique insight into the overall framing process. The four dimensions are helpful in developing a basic understanding of that process.

Subtopics are the first dimension for consideration when analyzing frames. The attributes in second level agenda setting (framing) are the independent variables. The categories used to name the attributes constitute the subtopics of an issue (Ghanem, 1997). Many of the traditional agenda setting researchers have grouped issues covered by the media to bring clarity to their analysis (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; McLeod, Becker, & Byrnes, 1974; Yagade & Dozier, 1990; Wanta & Foote, 1994; Brosius & Kepplinger, 1995). For the analysis of attributes in second level agenda setting, these sub-issues can be viewed as potential framing devices. The subtopics used to discuss an issue have great bearing on how that issue is perceived. Categorizing these topics provides a more concrete way for second level researchers to analyze agenda setting effects.

The problem with relying simply on the categorization of sub-issues for framing analysis is the subjective nature of such choices. Choosing the topic

of a news item based on individual perceptions can lead to biased categories. The researcher comes up with a list of subtopics and then analyzes content and codes accordingly. Difficulty arises when there is little distinction between the content analysis in general and the examination of frames. For this reason, research must go beyond the examination and categorization of subtopics to include other dimensions.

The second dimension includes an examination of the mechanisms used when covering issues in the media. Factors include the size, placement, photographs, pull quotes, and subheads used when covering a story (Ghanem, 1997). These all contribute to the prominence of the issue. Tankard (1991) terms these enhancing factors "framing mechanisms" (p. 15). These mechanisms provide a more in-depth picture of the topics covered in the media.

Thirdly, in order to gain a complete picture of the framing of an issue, there must also be a consideration of the affective aspects of the story. The affective dimension deals with the public's emotional response to media coverage (Ghanem, 1997). Use of story or chronicle narratives by journalists can have an effect on the public's emotional response and arousal (Donohew, 1983; Ghanem, 1997). News values such as proximity, human interest, and personalization are also affective factors embedded in the framing process (Hall, 1981; Elliott, 1988; Fowler, 1991). The affective structure of coverage frames the issue by attaching a tone to the story.

The last dimension necessary for the investigation of the framing process is the cognitive element. This dimension "deals with the general cognitive categories that might shed light on whether the media and the audience are thinking about the problem in the same way" (Ghanem, 1997, p. 13). Studies have used such categories as conflict, thematic vs. episodic, causal responsibility vs. treatment responsibility, abstract vs. concrete, and cause vs. solution to describe the cognitive details of a topic (Klandermans & Sidney, 1988; Edelstein, Ito & Kepplinger, 1989; Iyengar, 1989; Yagade & Dozier, 1990; Iyengar, 1991; Edelstein, 1993; Iyengar & Simon, 1993). These cognitive categories move beyond topical categories by identifying the theme underlying the general coverage regardless of the topic.

Used together, the four dimensions discussed provide a comprehensive picture of the attributes used in the media's framing of issues. Ghanem (1996) used all four dimensions to examine the framing of crime coverage in the media. The analysis focused on both first and second level agenda setting. Each of the dimensions included several variables based on previous literature. A total of 13 variables combined were used to represent the attributes of coverage. Significant relationships were found for each of the dimensions. Results indicated a correspondence between the four dimensions and public concern about crime.

Framing research is relatively new to the agenda setting paradigm. It is a growing method of analysis and is sure to provide the field with rich insight.

In order for such efforts to succeed, a widely accepted conceptualization will have to emerge detailing the most productive way to categorize and analyze framing studies. As the investigation continues, so must the inclusion of the detailed influences of individual characteristics on framing effects (Miller & Wanta, 1996). The application of framing research is useful to a variety of issues and disciplines. Some of the most recent attempts to apply framing research have begun to emerge in the political arena.

Framing in Political Discourse

Framing analysis is especially useful when investigating political issues. Because of little direct experience with politics, people in modern society depend on the news media for information to understand their political world (Park & Kosicki, 1995). This provides the media with great power to focus and frame political reality. The political arena is replete with those attempting to frame issues in their favor. As Gans (1972) noted, "In any modern society in which a number of classes, ethnic and religious groups, age groups and political interests struggle among each other for control over the society's resources, there is also a struggle for the power to determine or influence the society's values, myths, symbols, and information" (p.373). With many political issues, there are proponents in constant struggle over how to define an issue. Schattschneider (1961) notes, "political conflict is not like an intercollegiate debate in which the opponents agree in advance on a definition of issues. As a matter of fact, the definition of the alternatives is the supreme

instrument of power. . . He who determines what politics is about runs the country, because the definition of alternatives is the choice of conflicts, and the choice of conflicts allocates power" (p.68). This power demonstrated in media choices provides a climate for provoking study.

Entman (1991) examined the powerful effects of contrasting news frames employed by the media in the coverage of the KAL and Iran Air incidents. Political operatives played a role in shaping the contrasting frames. The words and images used in media coverage framed the KAL incident using a moral discourse, while confining the Iran incident into a technical one (Entman, 1991). Public opinion polls confirmed that the American public was influenced by the discourse used in framing the incidents.

Entman and Rojecki (1993) discuss the media coverage of the U.S. anti-nuclear movement from 1980-1983. They offer seven evaluative dimensions of the news message that are likely to affect how the movement will be framed. They include rationality-emotionality, expertise, public support, partisanship, unity, extremism, and power. Results indicated that coverage reflected the views of policy elites even when public support for the movement was abundant. Reese and Buckalew (1995) found similar results in their analysis of the framing of the Persian Gulf War. The media used "conflict, control, and consensus frames" (p. 47) to promote the heroic nature of the war and downplay any anti-war discourse. The valiant hero label

served policy interests by connecting the administration with the same heroic attributes.

Park and Kosicki (1995) found the opposite to be true in the framing of the Iran-Contra affair. The frames used had a negative effect on the current administration. The media framed the issue as a "valence issue," defined as an issue with overwhelming consensus and little political debate (Stokes, 1966, p. 172). They did not use "position" frames (p. 170), which would involve the intricate comparison of enacted policy to presidential expectations. The coverage of the Iran-Contra affair used valence frames by focusing on the administration's conspiracy in the secret dealing. Media frames prompted a simplistic judgment, thus having a negative influence on the public's presidential support. Research indicates a need to include policy agendas in the examination of framing effects in order to detect elite influence.

Jasperson, Shah, Watts, Faber, and Fan (1998) investigated the media's framing of the federal budget deficit controversy. Agenda setting effects were examined at both first and second levels. Several frames were noted in the coverage between 1994-1996, and the "fight" frame had a significant impact on subsequent public opinion. Combined agenda setting and framing effects accounted for 92 percent of variance. Results further support the notion that agenda setting effects are enriched by the inclusion of frames utilized in the media's coverage of issues. Both contribute to the ability to predict the importance of political issues in the minds of voters.

In the political arena, individual voting behavior is vital. McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar, and Rey (1997, 1998) investigated the framing effects of news articles and political advertisements on voter's perceptions in the 1995 elections held in Spain. They found a significant correspondence between the frames used and voters' substantive and affective perceptions of candidates.

At the individual level, framing can be noted in the specific ways in which voters form their ideas and preferences. Frames can be thought of as a type of schemata in that they provide structure to everyday experience and facilitate the construction of meaning for individuals (Kosicki, 1993). How an individual interprets the media frame plays a role in subsequent decisions (Shah & Domke, 1995). Iorio and Huxman (1996) found that individuals framed 1992 presidential election coverage by "linking, collapsing, and colorizing" their concerns.

The media may shift the ground upon which elections are decided by priming citizens about the importance of particular issues and issue content (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Iyengar, 1990). Iyengar and Kinder (1987) argue that when ordinary individuals are faced with complex political issues or events, they are not able to conduct a thorough analysis based on prior knowledge because of limited information-processing capabilities. More often, people make judgments based on pieces of information that are easily retrieved from the top of their mind.

This idea originates from the psychological “cognitive priming theory” defined by Fiske and Taylor (1991) as the effects of prior context on the accessibility of information when processing new information. A conceptualization offered by Wyer and Srull (1986, 1989) describes information as stored in memory in the form of metaphorical storage bins. Primed categories are retrieved from a storage bin and then, rather than being replaced to its original location, the information is placed on top of that bin. This information is now more accessible in memory and will be used more easily in subsequent decision-making processes. Since the media provide much of what we know about political information, their choices in coverage can drastically affect the increased accessibility of certain topics. By “priming” these issues, individuals use them as criteria for evaluating political behavior (Price & Tewksbury, 1995). Therefore, the media not only affect the perceived salience of issues, but also the degree to which certain issues are used to judge political figures (Willnat, 1997).

Iyengar, Peters, and Kinder (1982) investigated priming effects of media coverage on the evaluation of President Jimmy Carter. Their analysis showed a strong correlation between steady media coverage of defense issues and subsequent public evaluation of Carter’s defense performance and competence. Iyengar (1990) found similar results for those that evaluated President Ronald Reagan. He asserts that “the more prominent an issue in the national information stream, the greater the weight granted that

issue when individuals evaluate the president" (p. 171). Krosnick and Kinder (1990) found that judgements of Reagan's popularity became highly determinant on public support for the U.S. intervention in Central America immediately following the disclosure that funds from Iran arms sales had been used to finance the Contras. In short, evidence suggests that people use what they know to make judgements about political figures. If what they know is served to them by the media, then the increased accessibility or priming of such information will directly impact their subsequent evaluations.

Iyengar and Simon (1993) found evidence that suggests that agenda setting, framing, and priming occurred in the news coverage of the Gulf Crisis. Television news coverage of the Persian Gulf conflict significantly affected Americans' political concerns and the criteria they used to evaluate President Bush. Krosnick and Brannon (1993) also looked at media coverage of the Gulf Crisis and subsequent effects on individual judgements. They found priming effects on presidential evaluation that were mediated by political knowledge, exposure, and interest.

Shah, Domke, and Wackman (1996,1997) examined the effects of ethical textual frames versus material textual frames and found significant differences in the interpretations and subsequent decision making strategies of voters. These results suggest the news media's choices in selecting, emphasizing, and elaborating certain aspects of issues has a framing and priming effect on individual voter decision making.

If the media relay information regarding what issues are important, how we should feel about them, and what information we should access to judge others- then it is certainly worthwhile to study how and when these effects take place. What are the factors that contribute to such an affect? Many individual characteristics as well as issue dynamics are undoubtedly involved in this complex process.

The media's choices for actively constructing news may vary according to different points during an issue's evolution (Berelson, 1948; Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke & Roberts, 1978; Lang & Lang, 1983; Linsky, 1986). Linsky (1986) concluded that media are most influential in the developing stages of an issue, while the problem and solution are still in "flux." The media's framing of issues may also depend upon the limited amount of information available and the resulting competition for agenda space (Zhu, 1992). Studies on issue competition and attention, such as Downs' issue attention cycle, would then provide useful boundaries for analyzing the media's framing of an issue.

As Kosicki (1993) notes, "studying the attributes of the topics is another matter and has not often enough been explored by agenda setting scholars" (p.104). This research seeks to use the agenda setting model to study media effects on public opinion in the context of public issues. Specifically, the campaign reform issue was chosen because of its controversial nature and recent intrigue with the American public. An analysis of public, media, and

congressional agendas regarding the issue will be conducted in order to reveal first and second level agenda setting effects.

Research Questions

The purpose of this research is to analyze the transfer of salience with respect to first and second level agenda setting. The issue used for the investigation will be political campaign reform. The traditional first level agenda setting hypothesis will be examined. A variety of research questions relating to the second level of agenda setting will also be investigated. See Figure 2 for a depiction of these relationships. The time frame for study will be determined by the cycle of attention described by Downs (1972) because the pattern of issue attention provides a useful perimeter within which to study the media's agenda setting patterns. The following research questions were developed in response to pertinent agenda setting literature.

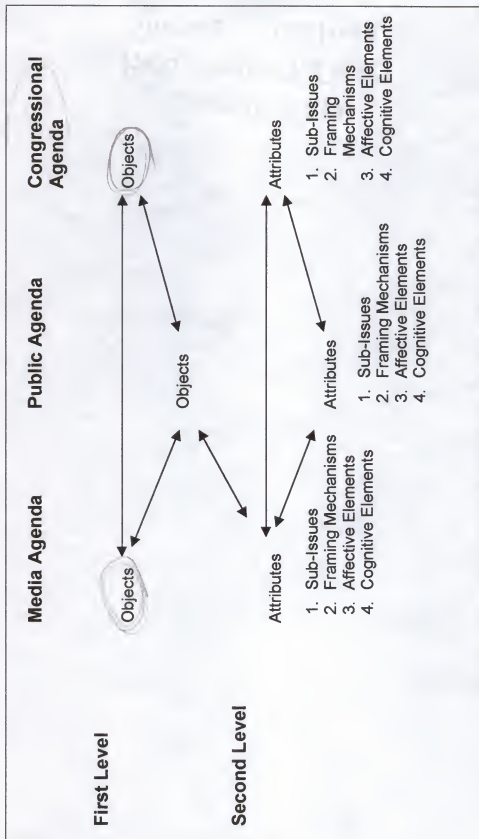


Figure 2: First and Second Level Agenda Setting Relationships Under Analysis

First Level of Agenda Setting

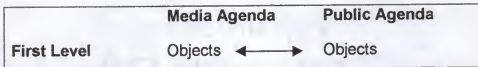


Figure 3: First Level Agenda Setting between the Media and the Public

Research Question 1

What is the direction of influence regarding the campaign reform issue on the media and public agendas (Figure 3)? This relationship will be represented by measuring cross-lagged correlation between the frequency of media coverage regarding campaign reform and the frequency of Internet discussion regarding the issue by the public.

Rationale

The assertion that the media affect what issues the public deem important is the most frequently studied relationship in the history of agenda setting research. Many scholars have found a strong relationship between these two agendas (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Funkhouser, 1973; Beniger, 1978; Mackuen, 1981; Iyengar & Simon, 1993; Gonzenbach, 1996; Domke et al., 1997). Based on past research, I suspect that the media's coverage of campaign reform will be correlated with the public's perception of its importance.



Figure 4: First Level Agenda Setting between the Public and Congress

Research Question 2

What is the direction of influence regarding the salience of the campaign reform issue between the public agenda and the congressional agenda (Figure 4)? This research question will involve recording the frequency of public discussion on the Internet regarding campaign reform and congressional speeches referring to the issue of campaign reform. Cross-lagged correlations will be examined to establish the direction of influence.

Rationale

Much research has investigated the relationship between policymakers and the general public with little agreement. Some would argue that the public agenda, once set by the media, affects the policy agenda (Rogers & Dearing, 1987). Others have found a similar correlation between the public agenda and the presidential agenda (Converse, 1987; Gonzenbach, 1992). Many of the past analyses have used a variety of measures to represent the policy agenda including the president, Congress, and even court officials. It is difficult to arrive at a consensus with the use of different measures. For this reason, I have formulated a research question to investigate this relationship.

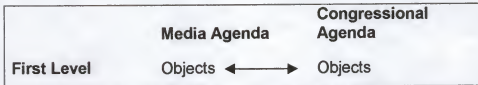


Figure 5: First Level Agenda Setting between the Media and Congress

Research Question 3

What is the direction of influence regarding the salience of the campaign reform issue between the media agenda and the congressional agenda (Figure 5)? This research question will involve recording the frequency of media coverage regarding campaign reform and congressional speeches referring to the issue of campaign reform. Cross-lagged correlations will be examined to investigate the direction of influence.

Rationale

Many scholars have asserted that the media have an affect on the policy agenda (Rogers & Dearing, 1987; Gonzenbach, 1992; Pritchard & Berkowitz, 1993). The variety of measures used to represent the policy agenda has thus far led to inconsistent findings. For this reason, I have chosen to investigate this relationship with a research question. This analysis will use congressional speeches as a representation of the congressional agenda. I expect to gain insight into the direction of influence between the congressional agenda and the media agenda on campaign reform.

Second Level of Agenda Setting

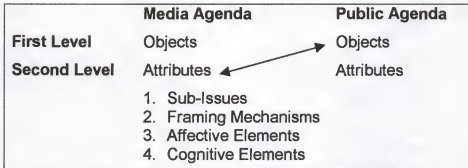


Figure 6: Second Level Agenda Setting between the Media's Attributes and the Public Agenda

Research Question 4

What is the direction of influence with regard to the media's coverage (attributes) of campaign reform and the salience attributed to the issue (objects) on the public agenda (Figure 6)? This will be investigated by analyzing the nature of the coverage of campaign reform along four dimensions (sub-issues, framing mechanisms, affective elements, & cognitive elements) and cross-correlating the results with the frequency of Internet discussion regarding the issue by the public.

Rationale

Ghanem (1996) asserts that the nature of coverage affects the amount of public concern with an issue. She found such to be true with respect to the crime issue. The attributes used in covering an issue in the media can have a powerful affect on the salience of an issue or topic on the public agenda and vice versa. This influence of media frames on the public agenda of objects

has been described as "compelling arguments" (McCombs, 1996). Although this influence has been noted, a sufficient amount of research to support a hypothesis has yet to emerge. For this reason, the analysis will be in the form of a research question. This study should provide yet one more step towards the establishment of a hypothesis.

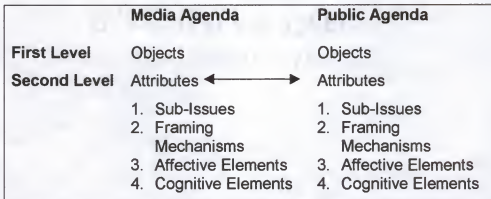


Figure 7: Second Level Agenda Setting between the Media and the Public

Research Question 5

What is the direction of influence regarding the nature of the media's coverage (attributes) of campaign reform and what the public thinks (attributes) about campaign reform (Figure 7)? This relationship will be evaluated by analyzing the cross-correlation between the sub-issues, framing mechanisms, affective, and cognitive attributes of media coverage and public discussion on the Internet.

Rationale

This research question is the first example of a purely second level agenda setting or framing effect. If, as past literature suggests, the media are "stunningly successful" in telling the public what to think about (Cohen, 1963), can we assume that the media may also influence how we think about issues? Recent analyses have found that the way in which the media frame issues may have a significant affect on how the public accesses and considers such issues (Entman, 1991; McCombs et al., 1997, 1998; Jasperson et al., 1998). Realizing that the second level agenda setting effect has yet to be researched to the point of supporting a hypothesis, I have chosen to examine this relationship with a research question. I will examine the influence of both media and public framing along four dimensions (sub-issues, framing mechanisms, affective, and cognitive) utilizing methods used in past research. I expect to find a powerful relationship between the media's framing of these attributes with respect to the campaign reform issue and the frames utilized in the public's discussion of the issue.

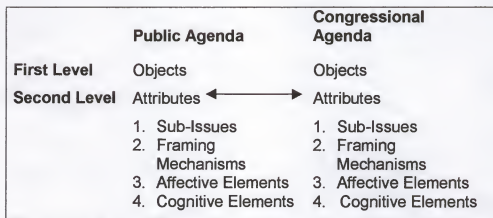


Figure 8: Second Level Agenda Setting between the Public and Congress

Research Question 6

What is the direction of influence regarding the sub-issues, framing mechanisms, affective, and cognitive attributes of campaign reform on the public agenda and the congressional agenda (Figure 8)? This research question will involve the analysis of attributes in public discussion on the Internet and congressional speeches referring to the issue of campaign reform. Cross-lagged correlations will be examined to indicate the direction of influence.

Rationale

The connection between the frames utilized by policymakers and those used by the public is sure to be meaningful. Research has yet to determine the direction of influence with respect to second level agenda setting. I have chosen to analyze the framing of campaign reform in Congress and the public with a research question in hopes of gaining insight into this relationship.

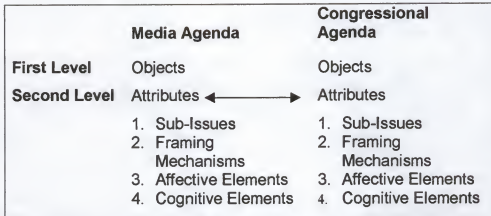


Figure 9: Second Level Agenda Setting between the Media and Congress

Research Question 7

What is the direction of influence regarding the sub-issues, framing mechanisms, affective attributes, and cognitive attributes for the campaign reform issue on the media and the congressional agendas (Figure 9)? This research question will involve the analysis of framing attributes utilized in media coverage and congressional speeches referring to the issue of campaign reform. Cross-lagged correlations will be investigated to infer the direction of influence for this relationship.

Rationale

While many scholars have recently investigated the relationship of media framing and public opinion, little research has focused specifically on the framing effects in the congressional agenda. This may be due to a lack of consensus regarding the representation of various policy agendas. This study will examine the relationship between the media's framing of campaign

reform and the frames used by the policymakers in Congress. I suspect that there will be a meaningful connection between the two.

The following chapter will address each of the research questions mentioned and outline the specific methods that will be used to analyze them.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

Agenda setting studies have traditionally utilized a variety of methods. The most common include representations of the public agenda through polling or survey data, representations of the media agenda through content analysis of various media sources, and representations of the policy agenda through the analysis of presidential or congressional remarks (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Funkhouser, 1973; Winter & Eyal, 1981; Shaw & McCombs, 1989; Cook & Skogan, 1990; Gonzenbach, 1996). Some have chosen to manipulate the variables experimentally (Iyengar, Peters & Kinder, 1983; Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Iyengar, 1989, 1991). The uses of a variety of methods have given the agenda setting paradigm added strength. This is especially true with respect to the first level or traditional agenda setting hypothesis. For the second level of agenda setting this remains to be seen.

It is the purpose of this study to investigate both levels of agenda setting using some familiar methods as well as some utilizing the new media. This study will examine measures of the media agenda, the public agenda, and the congressional agenda for the issue of campaign reform.

Content analysis will be used to gain unobtrusive quantitative measures for each of the agendas. This objective research technique offers scholars a replicable and accurate avenue through which to interpret communication

texts. Frequency counts and coding techniques will be used to identify the first and second level agenda setting effects.

The combination of these three agendas will add richness to the research design. As Kosicki (1993) urges, "each part of the process is incomplete and somewhat unsatisfying by itself, but by combining all three perspectives, the field can come closer to what a solid contemporary model of media influence ought to be" (p.101).

The following sections will discuss the chosen time frame for analysis and introduce the method for analyzing each agenda with respect to the campaign reform issue.

The Issue Attention Cycle

As mentioned in the review of pertinent literature, the time frame used for investigation of effects can have an enormous impact on the findings. For this reason, this study will attempt to analyze the issue of campaign reform in accordance with Downs' "issue attention cycle." In order to recognize the appearance of increased issue attention, the issue of campaign reform was recorded at six-month intervals in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* from 1988 until 1999. Figure 10 shows the result of the analysis.

According to the coverage in these two prominent media outlets, the attention afforded the issue of campaign reform is on the rise. With a small peak seen in 1993 and a larger peak in attention beginning in 1996, the cycle of issue attention appears to be presently in a period of plateau. This study

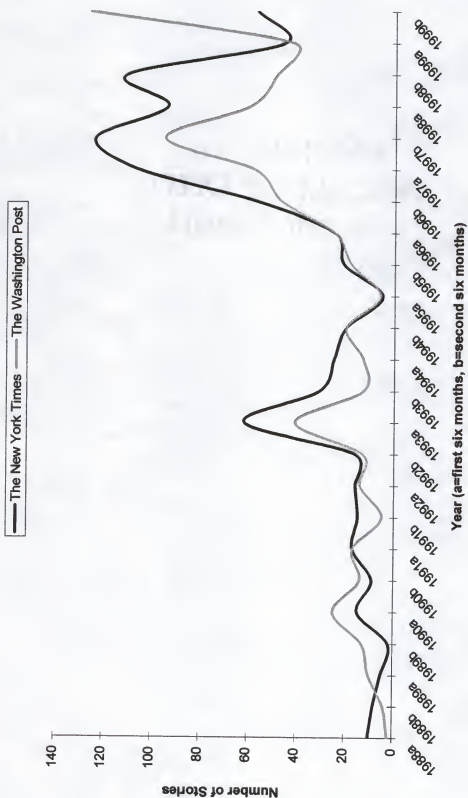


Figure 10: Coverage of Campaign Reform in the New York Times and the Washington Post, 1988-1999

will then take the most recent upswing in 1999 as an opportune time to investigate agenda setting effects. It is during the later portion of 1999 that the issue most recently took a marked upswing in media coverage.

In order to capture the time order and direction of influence for the three agendas, the entire year of 1999 will be analyzed. The three agendas (public, media, & Congress) will be monitored weekly for the 52 weeks in 1999. This will allow the use of a time series analysis. The statistical technique will utilize an ARIMA model to analyze the longitudinal data for each of the agendas (Yaffee & McGee, 2000). This method removes naturally occurring trends over time before comparing one data set with another to provide a more accurate analysis (Box & Jenkins, 1976; McCleary & Hay, 1980). This technique has been used with frequency in a variety of longitudinal studies (Gonzenbach, 1996; Jablonski & Bichard, 1997; Corbett & Mori, 1999; Roberts, Wanta & Dzwo, 1999).

Another advantage in using time series analysis is the ability to test for effects at several different time lags. The issue of time lag for effects is a very sensitive one (Chaffee, 1972; Winter & Eyal, 1981). If measurements are taken at a time lag that is too short, results will not capture the causal relationship. Measurements taken at a time lag that is too long may also be problematic. In this case, the effects may dissipate and therefore go undetected.

While many researchers suggest an optimal time lag of 4 to 6 weeks (Winter & Eyal, 1981), agenda setting effects have been known to vary depending on the measures used to represent agendas and the issues analyzed. Roberts, Wanta, and Dzwo (1999) found agenda setting effects for three issues in as little as 1 week when analyzing media coverage and Internet discussion. Others have found optimal lags for effects on the public agenda at up to four to six months (Stone & McCombs, 1981; Shoemaker et al., 1989). Wanta and Hu (1994) assessed agenda setting effects at several time lags and found that optimal lag times varied across different media. One to two weeks appeared to be optimal for television news, while newspapers had an optimal lag of three to four weeks.

In the study most similar to the present analysis, where the public agenda is represented by Internet discussion and the media agenda represented by a content analysis of mainstream media sources, an optimum time lag of less than 1 week was noted (Roberts, Wanta & Dzwo, 1999). The reason for such quick effects appears to be the ease with which individuals have access to Internet forums. It is likely that individuals will immediately respond to media coverage when discussing issues on the Internet.

Obviously, time lag can vary with each agenda being measured. Time series analysis allows for differences in time lag among separate variables. It is for this reason that the use of time series analysis in this study will provide the most accurate assessment of agenda setting effects. The following

paragraphs will explain the measures chosen to represent each agenda and how they will be examined in order to address the research questions in this study.

The Media Agenda

The analysis of the media agenda will be represented by stories in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. They will be accessed using the Lexis/Nexis database (See sample in Appendix A). Several studies have indicated that these two media frequently coincide and even preclude the coverage of issues by other media in the country (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Gans, 1979; Winter & Eyal, 1981; Danielian & Reese, 1989; Shaw & McCombs, 1989; Bichard, 1999). In order to validate this assertion, a weekly count of stories regarding campaign reform was recorded for these two media sources as well as three other major regional newspapers (The Boston Globe, The Houston Chronicle, & The Atlanta Journal and Constitution). The results are shown in Figure 11. The figure indicates that these five newspapers follow a similar pattern of convergence on the issue. The use of the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* should then provide an accurate depiction of the overall media agenda for the issue of campaign reform. Again, it can be noted that a surge of attention to the issue of campaign reform exists in the later portion of 1999. This further validates the decision to focus on the full year of 1999 to capture agenda setting effects.

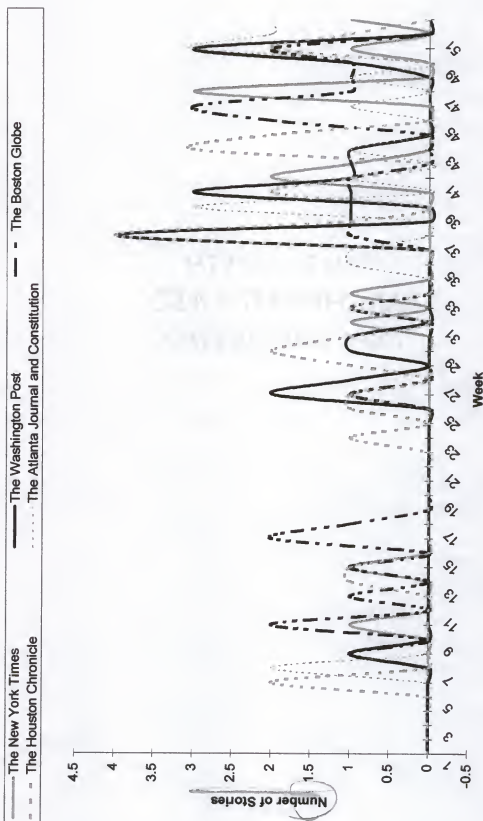


Figure 11: 1999 Newspaper Coverage of Campaign Reform Issue

Content analysis will be used to determine the media agenda for both first and second level agenda setting effects. For the first level of agenda setting, the content analysis will focus on the frequency of articles regarding the campaign reform issue. These will include any mentions of campaign finance reform or political campaign reform during the time period allotted. The Lexis/Nexis database will be used with the search string "campaign reform or campaign finance reform." Editorials will be eliminated as well as weekly summaries or articles written for regional publications. Once the articles are accumulated for the 52 weeks in the 1999 time period, they will be analyzed again for their relevance to the research project. Articles pertaining to campaign reform will be counted, whereas stories with a mere mention of campaign reform in the context of irrelevant discussion will be eliminated from the pool. The frequency count obtained will be used to represent the media agenda for the first level agenda setting analysis and to address research questions 1 and 3.

To investigate the second level of agenda setting, the content of the articles chosen to represent the media agenda will be scrutinized and coded for sub-issues, framing mechanisms, affective elements, and cognitive elements. The unit of analysis for the second level agenda setting analysis will be each article. Coding will be based on those used by Ghanem (1996) in her analysis of crime attributes in the media. Sub-issue attributes will refer to the subtopics that emerge regarding campaign reform as well as political

candidate references or partisan associations. The framing mechanisms coded will include the length of the article, the location of the article, and the presence of illustrative elements. The affective dimension will refer to the positive, negative, or neutral tone of the article referring to campaign reform issues. This will represent the hostility or even optimism displayed in the article. The cognitive dimension will refer to the use of causes, solutions, or both to frame the issue of campaign reform.

Upon completion, a random selection of 10% of the articles coded will be given to two additional coders for analysis to determine reliability (Holsti, 1969). These coders will be instructed on how to code each of the attribute dimensions. Inter-coder reliability will be established to the degree that shared meanings emerge in the coding process. This examination of the second level of agenda setting effects will directly address research questions 4, 5, and 7.

The Internet

The Internet is not traditionally used as a research tool in mass communication analyses. It is still considered a new media and has just recently emerged in scholarly study. The vast exchange of information available through electronic bulletin boards, mailing lists, and moderated newsgroups provide many avenues to study on-line communication structure. This new dimension of public discourse has impacted society with more than 100 million people now on-line (Weise, 1998). The impact of such an

enormous outlet for communication must be investigated in order to establish its placement in mass communication theory.

The Internet is considered a mass communication tool in that it has the capability to address thousands of people, yet it can still function with respect to individuals one-on-one. The impact of such flexibility is sure to provoke communication research opportunities for years to come. The present study investigates on-line communication as a representation of the public agenda by studying USENET discussion messages.

The USENET discussion groups are used by individuals to post a message about a given subject and then provide others on the Internet the opportunity to reply. This allows a public forum or debate to exist among individuals regardless of who they are or where they live. The USENET allows people to connect and transmit their views 24 hours a day at their own convenience. Users may discuss overtly or anonymously if they wish on a wide variety of issues. Some argue that the popularity of this on-line manner of discussion has resulted from the increased distrust and cynicism with traditional media outlets (Berger, 1995). Researchers have found that the interactivity of USENET groups provides a key avenue through which to monitor the opinions of the public (Bobbitt, 1995; Dzwo, 1998). Research has even noted that political discussion in USENET groups interact with dialogue similar to that of traditional social groups (Hill & Hughes, 1997).

The integrity of the data accessed from on-line discussion groups depends heavily on the sincerity of the comments posted, therefore a profile of Internet users is necessary in order to establish a better understanding of the sample chosen for this investigation. The applicability of the findings to the public in general also depends on the similarities and differences detected between Internet users and non-users.

Of the more than 100 million people on-line, over 60 million reside in the United States and the predominant language of the Internet is English (Sampat, 1998). The use of the Internet appears to be dominated by "boomers and young adults" (Russell, 1998). A current survey of Internet users by Mediamark Research (1999) asserts that 23% of adults under age 55 have been on-line in the past 30 days, while only 5% of adults 55 and over recorded usage of the Internet within the past 30 days. The same survey found that 50.8% of Internet users are men, 61.7% of users are married, 48% have children living at home, 75.1% have college education, 70.8% have jobs in the general management or service industry, and 33.1% have an income of less than \$50,000 a year.

A similar survey of American Internet users was conducted by the Luntz Research Company in 1997. This analysis was useful in that it offered a comparison of those who are Internet users with those that are non-users. The poll depicted users or the "connected" as those that exchange email at least once a week and use at least one additional technology regularly.

Additional technologies included cell phones, laptop computers, beeper/pagers, and home computers. The results suggest that 20% of those "connected" watch between 11-20 hours of television in a given week, with 19% of those "unconnected" watching 11-20 hours of television a week. As for obtaining news information, 24% of the "connected" look to newspapers and 20% look to cable television. For the "unconnected" the figures are 34% and 25% respectively. With respect to political involvement, 36% of the "connected" said that they always vote and 47% of the "unconnected" said that they always vote. Confidence in the political system was also similar for both the "connected" and "unconnected" with 36.2% and 42% respectively saying that they have "a lot of confidence in democracy". Many of the figures represented in the survey for both groups are strikingly similar. As the number of Internet users in America grows, the profile of users to non-users is becoming more and more alike (Edmondson, 1997). Although Internet users are still considered a distinct group, the bias is diminishing with each year.

Although Internet usage is prevalent, it cannot be asserted that users participating in USENET discussion groups are identical to the average American. The political involvement levels are certain to be heightened for these individuals if they are making the additional effort to assert their views in on-line discussion. This study, then, looks for a more powerful effect than traditional agenda setting research. The study will examine effects taken to the behavioral level. In other words, the use of such a measure actually

works against finding agenda setting effects. The investigation of the communication patterns on this new medium are well worth the added pressures in analysis.

The Public Agenda

As indicated, the investigation of the public agenda will be represented by public discussion regarding campaign reform on the Internet. The traditional representation of the public agenda with polling data was avoided because of a lack of consistency in polling questions (See Table 1). This lack of consistency was noted in campaign reform question samples pulled for the 1999 time frame. The wording of poll questions must have similarity in order to accurately measure changes in salience over time. Also, the campaign reform issue is not widely mentioned in 1999 as one of the most important problems in the nation when compared with problems such as crime, education, and the economy. The Internet, on the other hand, provides an avenue through which users can discuss a wide variety of issues. For this reason, the use of Internet discussion groups will be utilized to provide a depiction of public opinion regarding campaign reform in 1999. The use of on-line USENET discussion groups to examine political behavior is advantageous because it is accessible, free of charge, and can be instantly downloaded (Groper, 1996).

Table 1: Polling data samples for 1999

Date	Question	Percentage	Sample	Polling Organization
1/1999	Which of the following issues should receive the highest priority from Congress? (listing of various issues)	3% answered campaign reform	1,000 National registered voters	American Viewpoint National Monitor Survey
1/1999	What do you think are the two most important issues that the federal government should address?	1% answered campaign reform	1,011 National adults	Hart and Teeter Research Companies
2/1999	What do you think are the two most important issues that the federal government should address?	2% answered campaign reform	924 National registered voters	Opinion Dynamics Poll
5/1999	Which one of the following issues should receive the highest priority from the Congress this year? (listing of various issues)	2% answered campaign reform	1,000 National adults	American Viewpoint National Monitor Survey
7/1999	What one issue would you like to hear the presidential candidates talk more about next year?	1% answered campaign reform	1,200 National adults	Pew Research Center
10/1999	Suppose Congress passes campaign finance reform legislation. Do you think there would be a positive effect, no effect, or don't know?	Positive- 43% None- 44% Don't know- 13%	1,003 National adults	Wall Street Journal Poll
12/1999	Which candidate do you most associate with the campaign reform issue?	George W. Bush- 16% Steve Forbes- 7% John McCain- 18% Al Gore- 15% Bill Bradley- 8% Other/Don't know- 36%	1,073 National adults	Pew Research Center
12/1999	What is the single most important issue to you in deciding who to support for president? (listing of various issues)	1% answered campaign reform	1,006 National adults	Washington Post Poll

(Refer to Appendix B for complete list)

A search engine called *Deja.com* was chosen to access Internet discussion (See sample in Appendix C). *Deja.com* (<http://www.deja.com>) archives over 40,000 on-line USENET discussion forums from as far back as March, 1995. Past analyses have supported the usage of on-line text to represent the public agenda (Dzwo, 1998; Roberts, Wanta & Dzwo, 1999).

The unit of analysis represents each message retrieved using the search terms "campaign reform or campaign finance reform" for the 52 weeks in 1999. Although some argue that a message thread must include at least two response messages in addition to the original posted message (Rafaeli, 1988), this study analyzes every message under a thread as an independent unit as long as it relates to the issue of campaign reform. For this analysis, the discussion postings are being recorded as measures of public opinion and therefore do not necessitate responsive interactivity.

Once the pool of messages are accumulated, they will be scrutinized for their relevance to the research project. Messages containing discussion of campaign reform will be counted, whereas mere mentions of the issue in the context of irrelevant discussion will be discarded. The frequency of postings will be used in the investigation of first level agenda setting effects in an effort to address research questions 1 and 2.

For the second level agenda setting analysis, the USENET discussion messages will be examined and coded for sub-issues, framing mechanisms, affective elements, and cognitive elements. The unit of analysis will be each

individual message. Sub-issues will refer to the subtopics that are identified in the messages regarding campaign reform as well as political candidate references or partisan associations. Framing mechanisms will include the length of the message and the use of quoted references. The illustrative elements and the prominence in location will not be used for this agenda. The affective dimension will refer to the overall positive, negative, or neutral tone of the posted message. This does not refer to evaluations regarding campaign reform, but rather the overall tone of their language. The cognitive dimension will refer to the use of causes, solutions, or both to frame the content of the message.

Upon completion, a random selection of 10% of the coded messages will be given to two additional coders for analysis to establish reliability (Holsti, 1969). These coders will be instructed on how to code each of the attribute dimensions in on-line text. This examination of second level agenda setting effects will specifically address research questions 4,5, and 6.

The Congressional Agenda

The congressional agenda will be represented by the content analysis of *Congressional Records*. These records contain textual representations of speeches given by congressional members on the House and Senate floor. They will be accessed using the Lexis/Nexis database (See sample in Appendix D). Cook and Skogan (1990) found such measures to adequately represent the congressional agenda.

The Lexis/Nexis search term "campaign reform or campaign finance reform and 1 minute" will be used to obtain speeches in the 1-minute format for the 52 weeks in 1999. The 1-minute speech format was chosen for analysis to eliminate the extremely lengthy debates that likely refer to campaign reform briefly in the context of other discussion. Accumulated text will then be analyzed to further determine their relevancy to the research project. Speeches simply referring to campaign reform, but focusing on other topics, will be deleted from the pool. First level agenda setting will be examined by the frequency of records containing appropriate discussion of political campaign reform or campaign finance reform. This data will be used to investigate research questions 1 and 2.

For the analysis of second level agenda setting, the chosen speeches will be scrutinized and coded for sub-issues, framing mechanisms, affective elements, and cognitive elements. The unit of analysis will be each individual speech. Sub-issue attributes will refer to the subtopics that are identified in the speeches regarding campaign reform as well as references to political candidates or partisan platforms. The framing mechanisms utilized will include the length of the speech and the person giving the speech. Once again, the use of illustrative elements and location are inappropriate for this agenda. The affective dimension will refer to the overall positive, negative, or neutral tone of the speech. The cognitive dimension will refer to the use of causes, solutions, or both in framing the text of the speech.

A random selection of 10% of the chosen speeches will be given to two additional coders for examination to establish reliability (Holsti, 1969). This examination will ultimately provide answers applicable to research questions 3 and 4.

Coding Categories

A description of the coding categories used to investigate the attributes for the second level agenda setting analysis is necessary in order to provide an accurate picture of how the comparisons will be made. Each of the three agendas represented will be discussed with reference to specific coding categories (See Code Sheets in Appendix E). The following nine topics were chosen based on interviews with prominent researchers in the field of political science. These topics were chosen to represent the sub-issue attributes for the issue of campaign reform:

- **Freedom of speech:** This topic refers to any discussion of money as speech or 1st amendment rights.
- **Soft Money:** This topic refers to discussion regarding unregulated contributions from special interest groups, unions, or corporations.
- **Candidate advertising:** This topic refers to discussion of political advertising, free commercial time, or express advocacy of a candidate.
- **Incumbency Advantage:** This topic refers to the increased resources incumbents have access to- examples include franking privileges, gerrymandering, and the like.
- **Contribution Limits:** This topic refers to discussion regarding limiting campaign contributions to candidates running for office and includes limits on personal contributions made by candidates.

- **Expenditure Limits:** This topic refers to the discussion of limiting the amounts that candidates can spend to run a political campaign.
- **Political corruption:** This topic refers to mentions of a pervasive American cynicism with the corruption of the democratic process.
- **Specific Legislation:** This refers to specific discussion regarding campaign reform legislation or bills before Congress (example- FECA, 1971 or Shays/Meehan).
- **Reform proponents:** This refers to the discussion of individuals that support campaign reform such as McCain, Feingold, Shays, or Meehan.

The framing mechanisms chosen were duplicated from those used by Ghanem (1996) to denote prominence in the display of information. The following descriptions will be used to offer a descriptive analysis:

- **Length:** This will include the number of words in the text used for all three agendas.
- **Location (only for media agenda):** Articles will be coded for placement either on the front main page, front page of inside section, or elsewhere inside the newspaper.
- **Illustrative Elements (only for media agenda):** Articles will be coded for the presence of photographs or other graphics.
- **Quotes (only for public agenda):** Messages from the Internet discussion groups will be coded for the number of quoted references. This will be used in the absence of location or illustrative elements to provide an indication of prominence.
- **Speaker (only for congressional agenda):** Speeches on the House and Senate floor will be coded with respect to the partisanship of the speaker. This will be used in the absence of location or illustrative elements to provide an indication of prominence.

The affective attributes for this analysis will denote the tone of the text.

Past research has used similar depictions for the affective dimension

(McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar, & Rey, 1997; Lopez-Escobar, Llamas,

McCombs, & Lennon, 1998; Huckins, 1999; McCombs, Lopez-Escobar, & Llamas, 2000). The following descriptions will be used to categorize the positive, negative, or neutral tone of the material analyzed:

- **Negative:** This refers to discussion or text that is generally engaging in a negative or judgmental tone, hostile or conflictual, using attacks or aggressive language, pessimistic or sarcastic evaluations of the topic and those involved (word examples include: corrupt, disgust, frustration, chaotic).
- **Positive:** This refers to discussion or text that is generally making judgments in a positive or optimistic tone, stressing fairness and acceptance, presenting views using logical and non-inflammatory language, with a calm and sensitive demeanor (word examples include: agree, change, compromise, helpful, benefit).
- **Neutral:** This refers to discussion or text where there is an absence of judgment; statements are of a more factual nature; or non-evaluative reports of related events, gatherings, and meetings.

The cognitive dimension for this analysis will refer to the use of causes, solutions, or both to frame discussion of campaign reform. These cognitive attributes were replicated from past research (Iyengar, 1989, 1991; Entman, 1991; Rucinski, 1992; Ghanem, 1996). The codes for this dimension are as follows:

- **Cause:** This refers to attributions of causal responsibility, identification of who/what is responsible for problematic campaign financing or the absence of meaningful reform.
- **Solution:** This refers to attributions of treatment responsibility, mentions of who/what offer remedies, and how the problem should be alleviated.
- **Both:** This refers to attributions/identification of both the causes and solutions necessary to combat the problem of campaign financing.

The following chapter will provide detailed results of the content analysis. The sample will be discussed as well as the findings for each of the agendas. Each research question will be addressed with respect to both first and second level agenda setting effects.

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

This chapter provides a description of the sample used for analysis. A discussion regarding the frequency distribution for each sample will be offered as well as statistical analyses of each time series. The analysis will then address the results for each of the research questions offered in the previous chapter.

Descriptive Results of Content Analysis

The Media Agenda

Articles were retrieved from the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* using the Lexis/Nexis database. The search string "campaign reform or campaign finance reform" was utilized to facilitate the search. A total of 260 articles were retrieved for the year 1999. These articles were then analyzed to assess their relevance to the research project. Weekly summaries or regional publications were eliminated from the sample pool. Articles merely mentioning "campaign" or "reform" without association were discarded. A valid sample of 132 articles remained. Ironically, an equal number of articles were utilized from each source with 66 coming from the *New York Times* and 66 from the *Washington Post*. This pool of articles is smaller than anticipated,

but an acceptable number considering the small amount of attention afforded the issue by the media.

The content analysis of articles revealed media coverage of a variety of sub-issues for the topic of campaign reform. Table 2 provides percentages for each of the primary sub-issues covered during the time frame of the study. The most frequently covered topic involved discussion of reform legislation (33.3%). The second most frequently covered campaign reform topic focused

Table 2: Campaign Reform
Sub-Issues Covered by the Media

Subtopic	Percentage
Reform Legislation	33.3%
Reform Proponents	22%
Soft Money	11.4%
Free Speech	8.3%
Contribution Limits	5.3%
Political Corruption	4.5%
Candidate Advertising	3%
Incumbent Advantage	2.3%
Expenditure Limits	1.5%
None of the Above	8.3%
Total	132

on specific reform proponents (22%). These two sub-issues alone accounted for over 55 percent of the discussion by the media regarding campaign reform.

The frequencies of affective and cognitive elements in the media's coverage of campaign reform are depicted in Table 3. The affective tone of the articles was most often negative (42.4%). The articles maintaining a positive or neutral affective tone were fairly even split at 27.3 percent and 23.5 percent respectively. The cognitive elements coded referred to causal,

solution, or frames utilizing both causal and solution combined. Causal attributes indicated responsibility for the problem. Solution attributes referred to remedies for the problem. Combined usage refers to those utilizing both causal and solution attributes together to frame the issue. The most frequent cognitive element used by the media was the combined causal/solution frame (35.6%).

The media's use of framing mechanisms varied. Table 4 depicts the number of words most commonly used to discuss an article regarding campaign reform. The average number fell at 617 words per article.

Table 3: Affective and Cognitive Attributes in Media Coverage of Campaign Reform

Affective Attributes	Percentage	Cognitive Attributes	Percentage
Negative	42.4%	Causal & Solution	35.6%
Positive	27.3%	Solution	27.3%
Neutral	23.5%	Causal	21.2%
None	6.8%	None	15.9%
Total			132

Table 4: Number of Words used in Media Coverage of Campaign Reform

# of Words	Percentage
Under 100	5.3%
100- 300	17.4%
301- 500	16.7%
501- 700	22%
701- 900	22%
901- 1,000	4.5%
Over 1,000	12.1%
Mean- 617	Std. Deviation- 416
Total	132

The location and use of graphics were also noted as framing mechanisms in the media's depiction of the campaign reform issue. Table 5 offers percentages for each element coded during the time frame analyzed. The location of articles regarding campaign reform were most often inside the paper with a very small percentage of articles located on the front page or front inside section (5.3%).

Graphics were used sparingly when discussing campaign reform. Over 86 percent of the total sample did not offer illustrations, photos, or other graphical material (See Table 5).

Table 5: Location of Articles &
Use of Graphics

Location	Percentage
Inside Elsewhere	94.7%
Front Page/ Front Inside Section	5.3%
Graphics	Percentage
Illustrations / Graphic	
Inserts	9.8%
Photographs	3.8%
None	86.4%
Total	132

The Congressional Agenda

Speeches made in the House and Senate were retrieved from the *Congressional Record* using the Lexis/Nexis database. The search string "campaign reform or campaign finance reform and 1 minute" was used to obtain the sample. One minute speeches were used to represent the member's views on campaign reform. The search yielded a total of 85

speeches for the 1999 time frame. These were then analyzed for their relevance to the research project. Mere mentions of campaign reform in the midst of irrelevant discussion were discarded. A valid sample of 62 speeches remained. All of the 62 speeches chosen for the sample came from the floor of the House of Representatives. This is not entirely surprising given that the 1-minute debate format is more prevalent in the House than in the Senate. The issue of campaign reform also had yet to reach the Senate for debate in full force. The sample pool is again smaller than expected, but is acceptable given the low frequency of congressional discussion for campaign reform in relation to other topics for the 1999 time frame.

The content analysis of the speeches in the sample revealed a relatively limited use of sub-issues for the campaign reform topic. Table 6 shows a breakdown of the primary sub-issues mentioned and their percentages.

Table 6: Campaign Reform
Sub-Issues In
Congressional Speeches

Subtopic	Percentage
Reform Legislation	66.1%
Political Corruption	17.7%
Soft Money	6.5%
None of the Above	9.7%
Total	62

Reform legislation was by far the most dominant frame used in the speeches (66.1%). The political corruption frame is a distant second with a percentage of 17.7.

Affective and cognitive elements were detected in most of the speeches analyzed. Table 7 offers the percentages for each of the framing attributes. The affective tone of the speeches was evenly split with 46.8 percent displaying a negative tone and 46.8 having a positive tone. The cognitive elements utilized were predominantly a combination of causal and solution frames (54.8%).

Table 7: Affective and Cognitive Attributes in Congressional Speeches Regarding Campaign Reform

Affective Attributes	Percentage	Cognitive Attributes	Percentage
Negative	46.8%	Causal & Solution	54.8%
Positive	46.8%	Solution	25.8%
Neutral	0%	Causal	17.7%
None	6.4%	None	1.7%
Total			62

Framing mechanisms for the congressional speeches simply referred to the number of words used and the partisanship of the speaker. Table 8 depicts the percentages for each element. The majority of speeches contained between 100 and 200 words (67.7%). The average length for a speech was 192 words.

The partisanship for speakers on the campaign reform issue was overwhelmingly Democrat. Republican and Independent speakers only accounted for 17.7 percent of the sample analyzed (See Table 8).

Table 8: Length of Speeches &
Speaker Partisanship

# of Words	Percentage
Under 100	3.3%
100- 200	67.7%
201- 300	24.2%
Over 300	4.8%
Mean 192, St.dev. 96	
Partisanship	Percentage
Democrat	77.5%
Republican	16.1%
Independent	1.6%
None of the Above	4.8%
Total	62

The Public Agenda

The analysis of the public agenda for the campaign reform issue was represented by public discussion on the Internet. USENET discussion groups were retrieved using the search engine *Deja.com*. The initial examination retrieved over 12,000 messages for the campaign reform issue in 1999. The search string was then modified to include only the words "campaign reform" within 30 characters. This eliminated discussion of the two words "campaign" and "reform" without a relevant association. The search then revealed a total of 118 messages for the 1999 time frame. These were initially analyzed for their relevance to the research objective and a valid sample of 81 messages was chosen for further examination. Unfortunately, before the messages could be downloaded for further analysis, the search engine went out of business. The archives were sold to another on-line source and are no longer available to the public. The number of articles per week will still be

applied for the traditional agenda setting results, but the framing analysis will have to be postponed until the discussion archives are accessible.

Research Questions

A total of 275 representations of the campaign reform issue were coded for the combined analysis of the media, public, and congressional agendas. An intercoder reliability check produced a reliability coefficient of .89 for these coding decisions.

ARIMA Modeling

Time series analysis was used to examine the 7 research questions in this study. Each series containing the 52 weekly data points for 1999 was first modeled using ARIMA statistical techniques. Autoregressive integrated moving averages (ARIMA) time series analysis essentially estimates three parameters and can be expressed as ARIMA (p,d,q). The modeled processes are autoregression (AR), integration (I), and moving averages (MA). An ARIMA model predicts a value in a response time series analysis as a linear combination of its own past values and error (Box & Jenkins, 1976; SPSS, 1988).

The first parameter included in the (p,d,q) ARIMA model is autoregression (AR) and can be estimated by the strength or dependency of the correlation between directly adjacent values in a series. The second parameter for estimation includes differencing in order to strip off the integration (I) of the

series. This is necessary for any series exhibiting trend-like behavior, nonstationarity, or unsteady changes from one observation to the next. The third and final parameter for modeling is the moving average (MA) component and is characterized by the disturbance and persistence of random shock in a series. This is the degree to which each value in a series is determined by the average of the current disturbance and one or more previous disturbances.

The three parameters in an ARIMA (p, d, q) process are closely related and must be chosen carefully in order to build the most appropriate model for a given data set. This requires careful identification, estimation, and diagnosis until a satisfactory model is achieved (SPSS, 1988).

Examining autocorrelation (ACF) and partial autocorrelation (PACF) functions for each series is the first step in identifying your parameter choices (p, d, q). Once estimates are chosen, you can look to the reported t ratios for the modeled series as well as the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) and Schwartz Bayesian Criterion (SBC) goodness of fit statistics. Significant values suggest a successful model. Lastly, you must plot the autocorrelation (ACF) and partial autocorrelation (PACF) of the resulting error series for your chosen model. This series contains the residuals from the model and should produce randomly distributed nonsignificant (according to the Box-Ljung statistic) correlations resembling white noise. This permits a final diagnosis regarding the appropriateness of your model. If the suitability of the chosen

model appears questionable at any time during the identification, estimation, and diagnosis process you must repeat the steps until a satisfactory fit is achieved (Yaffee & McGee, 2000).

For the current study, each univariate series of data was modeled until an acceptable fit was achieved according to the above criteria. The results include a table for each series to demonstrate the chosen ARIMA model parameters and coefficients. Once the fitted series were built for each data set, a cross-correlation analysis was calculated in order to test the specific relationships addressed in the research questions for this examination of the campaign reform issue. The results are presented in tables detailing the cross-correlation coefficients at a variety of time lags and their corresponding significance.

First Level of Agenda Setting

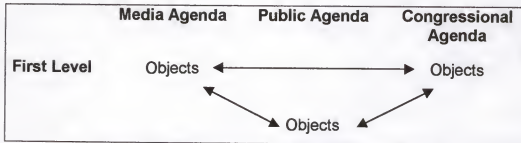


Figure 12: First Level Agenda Setting Relationships

Research questions 1-3 addressed the direction of influence regarding the campaign reform issue in media coverage, public Internet discussion, and congressional speeches (Figure 12). This examination focuses on the

traditional first level agenda setting relationship by investigating the salience of the issue. Figure 13 depicts the frequency distribution for each agenda in 1999. It can be noted that the three agendas appear to be related in their focus on the issue, but the direction of influence for these relationships is not apparent without further statistical analysis.

The nature of the three time series was first explicated using the ARIMA modeling technique. Table 9 displays the ARIMA model parameters chosen for the media, public, and congressional series. These series address only the first level agenda setting analysis. The model for the media agenda indicated a differenced, first-order moving average process: (0,1,1). The model for both the public and congressional agendas indicated a differenced, first-order autoregressive process: (1,1,0). All three coefficients appeared to significantly represent well-fitted models for these series.

Table 9: Public, Media, and Congressional Agendas
ARIMA Analysis of Univariate Series

Series	ARIMA term	Coefficients	t ratio	P
Public	(1,1,0)	$\phi_1 = -.66$	-2.70	.009
Media	(0,1,1)	$\phi_1 = .93$	11.23	.000
Congress	(1,1,0)	$\phi_1 = -.50$	-4.05	.000

Once the models for each univariate series were determined, bivariate relationships were examined using cross-correlation analysis. Table 10 provides a depiction of the public, media, and congressional correlations from

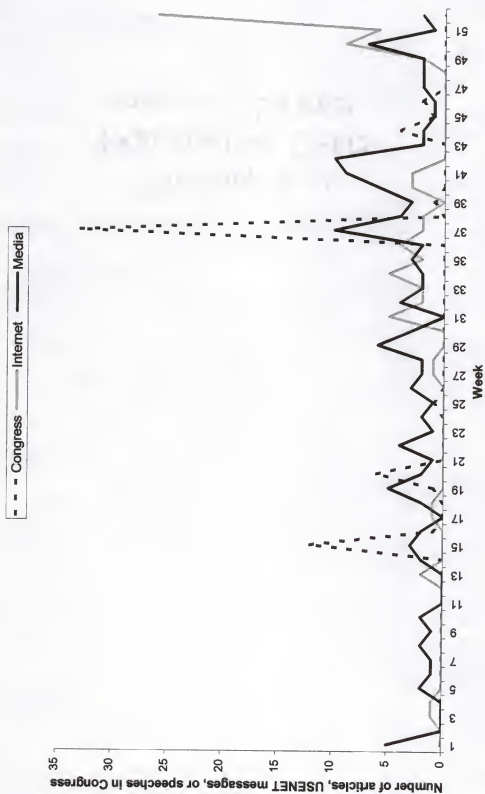


Figure 13: The Media, Public, & Congressional Agendas on Political Campaign Reform, 1999

a -7 to +7 week lag. As Table 10 indicates, there are several significant correlations. The public agenda precedes the congressional agenda with significant correlations at 2 to 3 weeks. The congressional agenda precedes the media agenda with significant correlations at 4 to 6 weeks. It is not a surprise then that the public agenda precedes the media agenda with its strongest correlation at a total lag of 5 to 7 weeks. The public agenda is also moderately correlated with the media agenda at a lag of 0, 1, 3 and 4 weeks.

Research question 1 specifically addressed the relationship between the salience of the campaign reform issue on the media agenda and the public agenda. The results indicate a strong agenda setting effect of the public on the media with the strongest correlations of .41 and .42 when public discussion precedes media coverage by 6 to 7 weeks respectively ($p < .05$). Moderate agenda setting effects were also discovered for the public as a leading indicator of the media with significant correlations when the public discussion precedes media coverage at 1 and 3 to 5 weeks ($p < .05$). The last significant correlation of .30 between the two agendas occurs at 0 weeks when the agendas are considered synchronous ($p < .05$).

Research question 2 specifically addressed the direction of influence regarding the salience of campaign reform between the public agenda and the congressional agenda. A significant agenda setting effect of the public on Congress was discovered with a correlation of .32 and .33 when public

Table 10: Cross-lagged Correlations of Public, Media, and Congressional Agendas

Public															
	<i>Precedes</i>		<i>Synchronous</i>							<i>Follows</i>					
Media	.42*	.41*	.38*	.32*	.29*	.27	.28*	.30*	.26	.25	.27	.25	.23	.24	.26
Congress	-.01	.22	.23	.18	.33*	.32*	.22	.10	-.01	-.05	.07	.14	-.03	-.12	-.15
Lag	-7	-6	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7
Congress															
	<i>Precedes</i>		<i>Synchronous</i>							<i>Follows</i>					
Media	.25	.30*	.34*	.32*	.23	.16	.14	.11	.05	-.01	-.02	-.02	-.01	-.03	-.04
Lag	-7	-6	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7

*p<.05

Note: Significant correlations at lags preceding zero denote that the public or Congress are leading indicators.

discussion on the Internet precedes congressional speeches by 2 to 3 weeks respectively ($p < .05$).

Research question 3 specifically examined the direction of influence regarding the salience of the campaign reform issue between the media and congressional agendas. A significant agenda setting effect of the Congress on the media was noted with a correlation of .32 and .34 when congressional speeches precede media coverage by 4 to 5 weeks respectively ($p < .05$).

Second Level of Agenda Setting

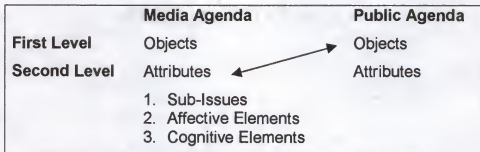


Figure 14: Second Level Agenda Setting between the Media Attributes and the Public Agenda

Research question 4 examines the nature of the media's coverage of campaign reform and the salience of the issue in public Internet discussion (Figure 14). This analysis addresses both first and second level agenda setting by positing a relationship between framing attributes and overall object salience. Figure 15 gives a complete depiction of the 1999 frequency distribution for the public agenda and a variety of media attributes concerning campaign reform.

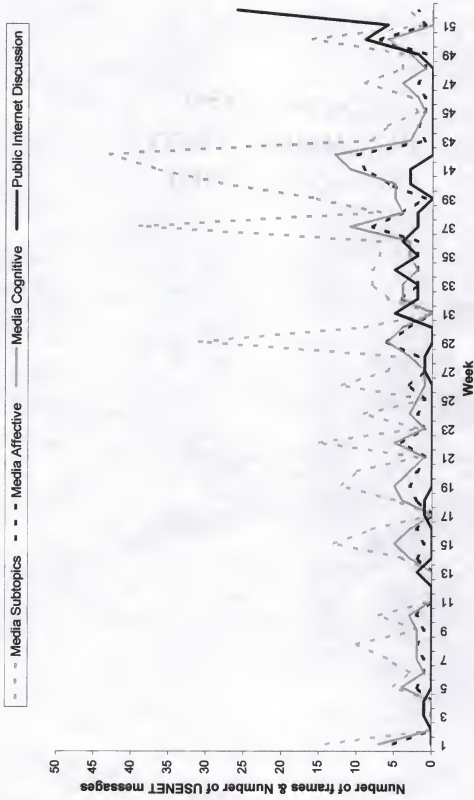


Figure 15: Total Media Framing Attributes and the Public Agenda on Political Campaign Reform, 1999

Sub-issues represent the most numerous media framing attributes with an average of 8.7 frames utilized per week. Affective and cognitive attributes in the media are represented with a moderate frequency of 2.3 and 3.0 frames per week respectively. The media's uses of framing mechanisms are not presented because they are not numerical in nature. The discussion of framing mechanisms has been thoroughly addressed in the previous section on descriptive results. The public agenda for the issue is represented by Internet discussion with an average of 1.6 messages per week. Statistical analysis of each series will reveal possible agenda setting effects.

Each time series was first defined using ARIMA modeling techniques. Table 11 presents the parameters chosen to fit the ARIMA models for the public agenda and the three series of media attributes. The model used for the public agenda indicated a differenced, first-order autoregressive process: $(1,1,0)$. The model for both the sub-issues and cognitive media attributes indicated a differenced, first-order moving average process: $(0,1,1)$. Finally, the model for the affective media attribute series indicated only a first-order moving average process: $(0,0,1)$. All four coefficients are significant below the .05 level and appear to represent appropriately fitted models for these series.

Table 11: Public Agenda and Media Framing Attributes
ARIMA Analysis of Univariate Series

Series	ARIMA term	Coefficients	t ratio	p
Internet Agenda	(1,1,0)	$\phi_1 = -.66$	-2.70	.009
Media Subtopic Attributes	(0,1,1)	$\phi_1 = .73$	7.03	.000
Media Affective Attributes	(0,0,1)	$\phi_1 = -.28$	-2.07	.043
Media Cognitive Attributes	(0,1,1)	$\phi_1 = .79$	7.84	.000

Once the univariate models were determined for each series, bivariate relationships were examined using cross-correlation analysis. Table 12 reports the overall relationships among the agendas. Cross-lagged correlations are offered at -7 to +7 week lags. The analysis indicates several significant correlations.

Research question 4 specifically addressed the possible agenda setting relationship between the media's use of attributes and the salience of the campaign reform issue on the public agenda. The results indicate several strong associations.

The public agenda appears to affect the media's use of subtopic attributes with the strongest correlations of .49, .50 and .46 when increased frequency of public discussion regarding campaign reform precedes the number of framing sub-issues utilized by 5 to 7 weeks respectively ($p < .05$). Smaller but

Table 12: Cross-lagged Correlations of Public Agenda and Media Framing Attributes

	Public														
	Precedes						Synchronous					Follows			
	.46*	.50*	.49*	.39*	.37*	.34*	.28*	.17	.08	.04	.06	.07	.08	.14	.26
Media Subtopics															
Media Affective	.10	.20	.32*	.19	.20	.14	.18	.29*	.26	-.03	.02	.05	-.01	-.04	-.07
Media Cognitive	.47*	.49*	.47*	.38*	.35*	.33*	.27	.15	.07	.04	.07	.06	.01	.06	.18
Lag	-7	-6	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7

* $p < .05$

Note: Significant correlations at lags preceding zero denote that the public agenda is leading the media attributes by the number of weeks indicated

still significant correlations also exist with the public Internet discussion preceding by 1 to 4 weeks (See Table 12).

The public agenda also appears to affect the media's use of affective attributes with a correlation of .32 when the increased frequency of public Internet discussion of campaign reform precedes the number of affective frames utilized by 5 weeks ($p < .05$). A significant correlation of .29 is also apparent at 0 weeks when the public agenda and the media's use of affective attributes are considered synchronous ($p < .05$).

The public agenda again emerges as a leading indicator of the media's use of cognitive attributes with strong correlations of .47, .49, and .47 when public discussion precedes the media's number of cognitive frames by 5, 6, and 7 weeks respectively ($p < .05$). Smaller yet significant correlations can also be noted when the public agenda precedes by 2 to 4 weeks (See Table 12). Overall, the public agenda appears to exert a somewhat powerful agenda setting effect on the media's usage of framing attributes most notably regarding the number of sub-issues and cognitive frames utilized.

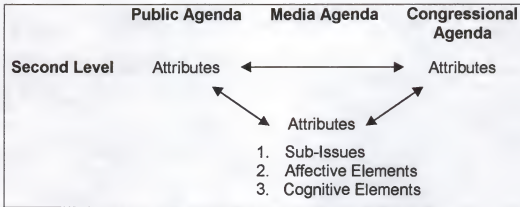


Figure 16: Second Level Agenda Setting Relationships

Research questions 5-7 addressed the direction of influence regarding the nature (attributes) of the media's coverage, public discussion on the Internet, and congressional speeches for the campaign reform issue. This is the only purely second level agenda setting analysis in this study (Figure 16). As noted previously, an analysis of the framing attributes reflecting the public agenda will be omitted due to the fact that the USENET discussion archives are no longer accessible. For this reason, research questions 5 and 6 will remain unanswered until further analysis is permitted. The sub-issue, affective, and cognitive framing attributes used to address the issue will still be analyzed for the media and congressional agendas. This will directly examine research question 7.

Before investigating the possible relationships between the two remaining agendas, each series of framing attributes were remodeled using the ARIMA statistical technique. The dimensions of the framing attributes will be analyzed separately with respect to each agenda so as to simplify the display

of results. Once the results for each dimension are explained, an overall analysis of the media and congressional framing attributes will be given to address research question 7.

Sub-issue dimension. The first dimension for examination will be the primary sub-issues revealed in the media's coverage and congressional speeches regarding campaign reform. Primary and secondary attributes were coded distinctly so as to offer a greater depth of analysis for sub-issue framing effects.

Table 13 depicts the ARIMA model parameters chosen for each series of primary sub-issue attributes in the media's coverage of campaign reform. The three primary sub-issues were soft money, political corruption, and reform legislation. All three models represent a significant fit.

Table 13: Media Primary Sub-Issue Attributes
ARIMA Analysis of Univariate Series

Series	ARIMA term	Coefficients	t ratio	P
Soft Money	(1,1,0)	$\phi_1 = -.44$	-3.47	.001
Political Corruption	(0,0,1)	$\phi_1 = -.65$	-5.80	.000
Reform Legislation	(1,0,1)	$\phi_1 = -.68 \text{ \& } -.93$	-4.08 \& -9.02	.000 \& .000

The ARIMA parameters for each series of the congressional primary sub-issue attributes are provided in Table 14. The three primary issues analyzed are also soft money, political corruption, and reform legislation. These were

chosen because they are the only three issues that were covered at the primary level by both the media and congressional agendas.

Table 14: Congress Primary Sub-Issue Attributes
ARIMA Analysis of Univariate Series

Series	ARIMA term	Coefficients	t ratio	P
Soft Money	(1,1,0)	$\phi_1 = -.49$	-3.97	.000
Political Corruption	(1,1,0)	$\phi_1 = -.48$	-3.87	.000
Reform Legislation	(1,1,0)	$\phi_1 = -.49$	-3.92	.000

After the models for the univariate series in each of the two agendas were determined, bivariate associations were examined using cross-correlation analysis. Table 15 gives an overall depiction of the relationships between the primary sub-issue framing attributes utilized by the media and Congress. These are provided at -7 to +7 week lags. Multiple significant correlations are evident.

The results in table 15 indicate a moderate agenda setting effect of the congressional attributes on the media's attributes for the soft money frame. The positive correlation of .33, .42, and .31 occur when congressional framing attributes for the issue precedes media attribute coverage by 3, 4, and 5 weeks respectively ($p < .05$). This relationship suggests an agenda setting effect of the congressional framing agenda on the media framing agenda.

Table 15: Cross-lagged Correlations of Primary Subtopic Framing Attributes:
Congress and Media

		Congress														
Media		Precedes					Synchronous					Follows				
	Soft Money	-.17	.00	.31*	.42*	.33*	.08	.08	.36*	.25	-.05	-.15	-.14	-.14	.12	
	Political Corruption	-.02	-.11	.45*	.80*	.20	-.05	-.05	-.05	-.07	.01	.06	-.02	-.06	-.07	
	Reform Legislation	-.09	.09	-.09	.14	.15	-.02	-.09	.03	.41*	.05	-.05	-.02	-.07	-.04	
	Lag	-7	-6	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	

* $p < .05$

Note: Significant correlations at lags preceding zero denote that the Congress leads the media with respect to the attribute indicated

Another significant correlation of .36 exists for the two agendas on soft money at 0 weeks when the agendas are considered synchronous ($p < .05$).

The results indicate a very strong correlation of .80 for the political corruption frame when congressional framing attributes precede media attribute coverage by 4 weeks ($p < .05$). A moderately strong correlation of .45 is also noted for the political corruption frame when the congressional attributes for the issue precede media attributes by 5 weeks ($p < .05$). This relationship again implies that the direction of agenda setting influence runs from the congressional framing agenda to the media framing agenda.

Results indicate a significant relationship between the two agendas for the reform legislation sub-issue frame as well. A correlation of .41 is detected (Table 15) when the media's attribute coverage for the issue precedes congressional attributes by 1 week ($p < .05$). This is the only significant relationship in which the direction of influence depicts the media framing agenda as a leading indicator of the congressional framing agenda rather than vice versa. This may suggest a two-way relationship.

Secondary sub-issues were also coded with respect to campaign reform on the media and congressional agendas. These issues were not necessarily the dominant focus, but were mentioned with enough frequency to merit analysis. Eight sub-issues were noted that received secondary emphasis on both agendas. The following issues are those chosen for comparison: free

speech, soft money, candidate advertising, contribution limits, expenditure limits, political corruption, reform legislation, and reform proponents.

Table 16 provides the ARIMA parameter choices and the significance figures for each series of secondary sub-issue attributes used by the media.

Table 16: Media Secondary Sub-Issue Attributes
ARIMA Analysis of Univariate Series

Series	ARIMA term	Coefficients	t ratio	P
Free Speech	(0,0,1)	$\phi_1 = -.56$	-4.74	.000
Soft Money	(1,1,0)	$\phi_1 = -.48$	-3.83	.000
Candidate Advertising	(1,1,0)	$\phi_1 = -.50$	-4.12	.000
Contribution Limits	(1,1,0)	$\phi_1 = -.49$	-3.96	.000
Expenditure Limits	(1,1,0)	$\phi_1 = -.57$	-4.89	.000
Political Corruption	(1,1,0)	$\phi_1 = -.53$	-4.45	.000
Reform Legislation	(0,1,1)	$\phi_1 = .58$	4.80	.000
Reform Proponents	(0,1,1)	$\phi_1 = .86$	9.51	.000

The ARIMA parameters for each series of the congressional secondary sub-issue attributes are depicted in Table 17. Each of the chosen coefficients represent well-fitted models for these series ($p < .05$).

Table 17: Congress Secondary Sub-Issue Attributes
ARIMA Analysis of Univariate Series

Series	ARIMA term	Coefficients	t ratio	P
Free Speech	(1,1,0)	$\phi_1 = -.49$	-3.97	.000
Soft Money	(1,1,0)	$\phi_1 = -.49$	-3.93	.000
Candidate Advertising	(1,1,0)	$\phi_1 = -.49$	-3.97	.000
Contribution Limits	(1,1,0)	$\phi_1 = -.49$	-3.97	.000
Expenditure Limits	(1,1,0)	$\phi_1 = -.49$	-3.97	.000
Political Corruption	(1,1,0)	$\phi_1 = -.48$	-3.95	.000
Reform Legislation	(1,1,0)	$\phi_1 = -.48$	-3.91	.000
Reform Proponents	(1,1,0)	$\phi_1 = -.49$	-3.97	.000

Once the appropriate ARIMA models were determined for each univariate series in the two agendas, bivariate relationships were examined using cross-correlation analysis. This revealed several significant connections between the media and congressional use of secondary level framing attributes. These are depicted in Table 18 with lags ranging from -7 to +7 weeks.

Table 18: Cross-lagged Correlations of Secondary Subtopic Framing Attributes:
Congress and Media

	Congress														
	Precedes							Synchronous							Follows
	-.09	-.08	.07	.45*	.58*	.35*	-.05	.20	.40*	.10	-.10	-.04	.01	-.09	-.07
Free Speech															
Soft Money	-.15	.06	.49*	.67*	.36*	.05	.14	.38*	.16	-.11	-.10	-.08	-.12	-.18	-.11
Candidate Advertising	-.16	.08	.48*	.61*	.30*	-.03	.17	.46*	.17	-.07	-.09	-.13	-.12	-.10	.07
Contribution Limits	-.01	-.01	.21	.42*	.32*	.12	.01	.09	.09	-.12	-.12	-.01	-.11	-.22	-.01
Expenditure Limits	-.19	.02	.17	.07	.10	.08	-.10	-.19	-.09	-.02	-.02	.07	.05	-.14	.09
Political Corruption	-.18	.10	.46*	.44*	.44*	.34*	.18	.13	-.00	-.11	-.03	.07	.01	-.09	.08
Reform Legislation	.08	.29*	.50*	.51*	.42*	.26	.06	-.02	-.05	-.03	.05	.09	.04	-.04	-.00
Reform Proponents	.25	.29*	.31*	.27	.14	.09	.11	.13	-.05	-.19	-.15	-.11	-.06	-.03	.00
Lag	-7	-6	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7

*p<.05

Note: Significant correlations at lags preceding zero denote that Congress leads the media with respect to the attribute indicated

The results in Table 18 indicate an overall trend for the agenda setting effect of the congressional attributes on the media's attributes for 7 out of the 8 secondary sub-issues examined. The soft money and candidate advertising frames reveal the strongest correlations of .67 and .61 respectively when congressional framing precedes media framing by 4 weeks ($p < .05$). Both sub-issues also have significant correlations at 0 weeks when the two agendas are considered synchronous.

The free speech sub-issue frame offers a correlation of .58 when congressional framing precedes media framing by 3 weeks ($p < .05$). Many other significant relationships are detected in Table 18 with the most common direction of influence depicting the congressional framing agenda as a leading indicator of the media framing agenda. The time lags range from 2 to 6 weeks for these correlations.

Interestingly enough, results also depict a moderate correlation of .40 when media framing precedes congressional framing by 1 week for the free speech sub-issue ($p < .05$). As noted previously, significant correlations were found for the reverse agenda setting effect as well (especially at 3 weeks). This may indicate a two-way relationship between the two agendas for the freedom of speech issue.

Affective dimension. The second dimension for the framing analysis will address the affective attributes used in the media's coverage and congressional speeches regarding campaign reform. These will include only

the negative and positive frames utilized to present the issue for both agendas. The neutral frame was not used in Congress, therefore no comparison can be offered.

The ARIMA model parameters chosen for each series of affective attributes in the media are depicted in Table 19. Both of the modeled series represent significant fits below the .05 level.

Table 19: Media Affective Attributes
ARIMA Analysis of Univariate Series

Series	ARIMA term	Coefficients	t ratio	P
Negative	(1,1,0)	$\phi_1 = -.44$	-3.47	.001
Positive	(1,0,1)	$\phi_1 = .92 \text{ \& } .83$	6.12 & 3.70	.000 & .000

Table 20 provides the ARIMA parameters chosen for the same two series of affective attributes with respect to congressional speeches on campaign reform. All models again represent a significant fit.

Table 20: Congress Affective Attributes
ARIMA Analysis of Univariate Series

Series	ARIMA term	Coefficients	t ratio	p
Negative	(1,1,0)	$\phi_1 = -.49$	-4.02	.000
Positive	(1,1,0)	$\phi_1 = -.48$	-3.82	.000

After the models were derived for the affective attributes in both agendas, bivariate relationships were examined using the cross-correlation analysis technique. Results are presented for this analysis in Table 21.

Table 21: Cross-lagged Correlations of Affective Framing Attributes: Congress and Media

		Congress and media														
		Congress														
		Precedes					Synchronous					Follows				
Media	Negative	-.16	-.07	.39*	.54*	.21	.03	.10	.03	.06	.13	.07	.00	-.10	-.10	.01
	Positive	.20	.25	.25	.20	.09	.05	.07	.10	.03	-.03	.02	.03	.08	.00	-.10
	Lag	-7	-6	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7

*p<.05

Note: Significant correlations at lags preceding zero denote that Congress leads the media with respect to the attribute indicated

The comparison of negative attributes used by the media and congressional agenda revealed a relatively strong correlation of .56 when the congressional frames precede the media frames by 4 weeks ($p < .05$). This relationship persists at 5 weeks with a correlation of .39 ($p < .05$). This suggests an agenda setting effect of Congress on the media for the use of negative attributes.

The comparison of positive attributes used by the media and Congress failed to produce any significant correlations. The correlations averaged a low .10 between the two agendas for the positive affective attribute. This implies that no agenda setting relationship exists between the two agendas for the use of positive attributes.

Cognitive dimension. The third and final dimension for examination will be the cognitive attributes revealed in the media's coverage and congressional speeches regarding campaign reform. This will include the analysis of causal frames, solution frames, as well as the use of causal and solution frames combined.

The ARIMA parameters for the modeled series of cognitive attributes in the media are presented in Table 22. All three coefficients significantly represent well-fitted models for these series.

Table 22: Media Cognitive Attributes
ARIMA Analysis of Univariate Series

Series	ARIMA term	Coefficients	t ratio	p
Causal	(0,1,1)	$\phi_1 = .70$	6.32	.000
Solution	(1,1,0)	$\phi_1 = -.46$	-3.61	.001
Causal & Solution	(1,1,0)	$\phi_1 = -.37$	-2.81	.007

Table 23 provides the ARIMA parameters for the congressional series of the same cognitive attributes. The analysis of the univariate series indicates an appropriate fit for each of the chosen models ($p < .05$).

Table 23: Congress Cognitive Attributes
ARIMA Analysis of Univariate Series

Series	ARIMA term	Coefficients	t ratio	p
Causal	(1,1,0)	$\phi_1 = -.50$	-4.06	.000
Solution	(1,1,0)	$\phi_1 = -.48$	-3.91	.000
Causal & Solution	(1,1,0)	$\phi_1 = -.48$	-3.91	.000

Once the ARIMA models were determined for both the media and congressional series, bivariate associations were examined using cross-correlation analysis. Table 24 offers the results for the cross-correlation of the cognitive framing attributes. Results indicate numerous significant relationships.

Table 24: Cross-lagged Correlations of Cognitive Framing Attributes:
Congress and Media

		Congress and media														
		Precedes							Congress							
									Synchronous			Follows				
Media	Causal	.23	.40*	.62*	.56*	.31*	.19	.17	.17	.10	.00	-.07	-.09	-.14	-.17	-.13
	Solution	-.18	-.05	.29*	.48*	.26	.05	.20	.42*	.19	-.09	-.12	.01	.11	-.05	-.00
	Causal and Solution	-.22	.03	.51*	.70*	.46*	.17	.01	.11	.14	-.06	-.15	-.05	-.08	-.19	-.13
Lag		-7	-6	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7

* $p < .05$

Note: Significant correlations at lags preceding zero denote that the Congress leads the media with respect to the attribute indicated

The underlying trend apparent in the results (Table 24) suggest that congressional framing has an agenda setting effect on media framing for all of the cognitive attributes. The strongest correlations are detected when the congressional frames precede the media frames by 3 to 6 weeks. A very large correlation of .70 appears specifically for the use of combined causal and solution attributes when the congressional agenda precedes the media agenda by 4 weeks ($p < .05$). The agendas also have a synchronous correlation of .42 for the use of solution framing attributes at a 0 week lag ($p < .05$).

Research question 7 specifically addressed the relationship between the attributes used in the media agenda and the attributes used in the congressional agenda for the campaign reform issue. This analysis offered a three dimensional examination of the attributes used for both agendas. Primary sub-issues, secondary sub-issues, affective attributes, and cognitive attributes were used to provide a complete picture of the framing effects.

Results overwhelmingly indicated an agenda setting influence of the congressional frames on the media frames for the campaign reform issue. This held true for each of the framing dimensions analyzed. Further discussion of these and previous results will be addressed in the following chapter. The final chapter will also detail the limitations of this study and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

Traditional agenda setting has for years asserted that the salience afforded an issue in one agenda will affect the salience of that same issue with respect to other agendas (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). This is a time-related process that has been studied with a variety of methodologies. Based on this accumulation of research, the concept of the agenda setting process has often addressed the following three components: the media agenda, the public agenda, and the policy agenda (Rogers & Dearing, 1988; Gonzenbach, 1992, 1996).

Recent efforts have expanded the agenda setting theoretical framework to include a second level (McCombs, 1981, 1992; McCombs & Evatt, 1995; Ghanem, 1996, 1997; McCombs & Ghanem, 1998). Agenda setting is no longer limited to the study of issue salience. As McCombs and Evatt (1995) state, "in addition to providing cues about the salience of topics-objects, if you will- the mass media differentiate between the saliency of various attributes of these topics or objects" (p.134). In this respect, *what* (objects) as well as *how* (attributes) an issue is emphasized may have an agenda setting influence.

This study was specifically designed to examine the traditional first level of agenda setting as well as the second level of agenda setting for the campaign reform issue in 1999. The importance of further research bridging the two

levels of agenda setting is vital in the development of an expanded theoretical paradigm. The present analysis included representations of the media agenda, the public agenda, and the congressional agenda. Articles from the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* were used to depict the media agenda. Speeches on the floor of the House and Senate portrayed the congressional agenda. Finally, messages from USENET on-line discussion groups represented the public agenda for the issue.

The examination began by scrutinizing the salience of the campaign reform issue as an object on the three agendas. This involved frequency counts for each agenda to represent the amount of attention afforded the issue. This was then expanded to include an analysis of the attributes for the issue as well. An analysis of the possible bi-level effects between issue salience and issue attributes was also included. The overall objective of the investigation was to capture a complete and accurate picture of the forces that sculpt the three agendas. This incorporates both how much they *think about* the campaign reform issue and then specifically *what they think* regarding the campaign reform issue.

The study analyzed the campaign reform issue as it appeared in the media, public, and congressional agendas for the 52 weeks of 1999. Items were coded for the three agendas and cross-correlations were established using ARIMA time series models. First level agenda setting was represented by the frequency of emphasis, while second level agenda setting was

represented by four framing dimensions. The four dimensions have been utilized in past research (Ghanem, 1996, 1997) and include the following: subtopics, framing mechanisms, affective attributes, and cognitive attributes. Framing mechanisms were addressed at the descriptive level, while the remaining three dimensions were used to provide an in-depth time series analysis of the attributes.

Results for the first level analysis suggest that the most immediate significant agenda setting effect is between the public and media agendas. They are correlated in their emphasis of the campaign reform issue at week 0 (synchronous) and when public attention on the Internet precedes media coverage by 1 week. Past research has revealed that media coverage often reflects consumer desire (Graber, 1979; Gonzenbach, 1992). A summation of all significant first level results is depicted in Figure 17.

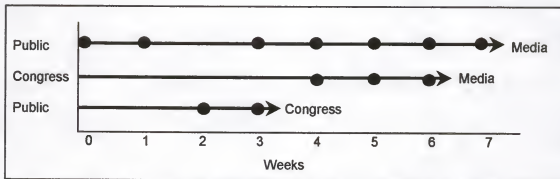


Figure 17: First Level Agenda Setting Relationships for the Media, Public, and Congressional Agendas (● $p < .05$, For example: Line three denotes that the public leads Congress with .05 significance at a 2 and 3 week lag)

The next first level agenda setting effect appears to be of the public agenda on the congressional agenda at a lag of 2 to 3 weeks. This too has

been found in past research (Page & Shapiro, 1983; Converse, 1987; Gonzenbach, 1992). It is commendable to think that the public should exert such an influence in shaping congressional debate. The use of Internet discussion surely represents a more politically active public and appears to exert a powerful effect on those in policy positions.

A significant agenda setting effect is then noted when congressional attention precedes media attention by 4 to 6 weeks. This is not the first study to reveal that policy elites may affect media coverage (Walker, 1977; Behr & Iyengar, 1985; Rogers, Dearing, & Chang, 1991).

Finally, the public agenda is again correlated with the media agenda at a lag of 3 to 7 weeks. This may indicate that overall the public begins by voicing their concerns about campaign reform on the Internet, the media then quickly picks up on them with increased coverage. Congressmen also heed these public concerns and in turn speak about them 2 to 3 weeks later in Congress. The media cover the issue in response to congressional debate approximately 4 to 6 weeks later. At this time the public and media agendas become highly correlated (Figure 17). In this respect, we can be optimistic in stating that in many ways the public shapes the concern for the issue of campaign reform.

Results for the second level analysis begin by offering a bi-level investigation of the agenda setting relationship between the salience of campaign reform on the public agenda (first level) and the attributes used

regarding the issue in the media (second level). Figure 18 offers a portrait summarizing these relationships for the campaign reform issue.

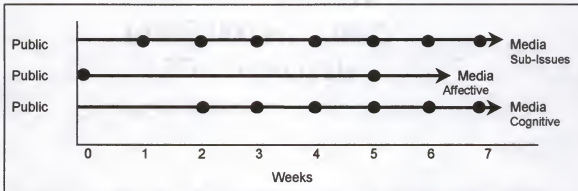


Figure 18: Bi-Level Agenda Setting Relationship between the Public Agenda and Media Framing Attributes (● $p < .05$. For example: Line two denotes that the public leads media affective attributes with .05 significance at a 0 and 5 week lag)

Results indicate that the public agenda is a leading indicator for the frequency of framing attributes utilized by the media. This holds true especially for the media's use of subtopics and cognitive attributes, but is weaker with respect to the use of affective attributes. It is plausible that in this instance the tone of media coverage for these two newspapers is at times more likely to be independent. These relationships are surprising because past research suggests the opposite, that the number of attributes in the media compels the public to assign increased salience to issues (McCombs, 1996; Ghanem, 1996, 1997). Perhaps, the reverse is true in this case because the public agenda is represented by those taking the more aggressive step in communicating their concerns on the Internet. These

individuals are more likely to be politically active and their voice appears to exert a powerful effect.

The second level of agenda setting is again addressed with an examination of the media and congressional attributes used to frame the campaign reform issue. This final investigation differs from the previous in that it offers a comparison that is strictly concerned with the attributes utilized by each agenda. Figure 19 presents a summary of the significant relationships apparent in the second level agenda setting for media and congressional attributes.

Several attributes are displayed indicating a variety of relationships between the two agendas. The obvious trend suggests that the congressional framing agenda leads the media framing agenda by an average of 3 to 6 weeks. Past research has also indicated such a relationship between the policy and media agendas (Entman & Rojecki, 1993; Reese & Buckalew, 1995). This correlation held true for the majority of attributes, with only two (positive affective and expenditure limits) failing to produce a significant relationship. The first is understandable considering that the positive tone is arguably the least attractive for media coverage. A lack of significant results regarding expenditure limits can be attributed to the fact that this sub-issue simply received minimal attention from either of the two agendas (Figure 19).

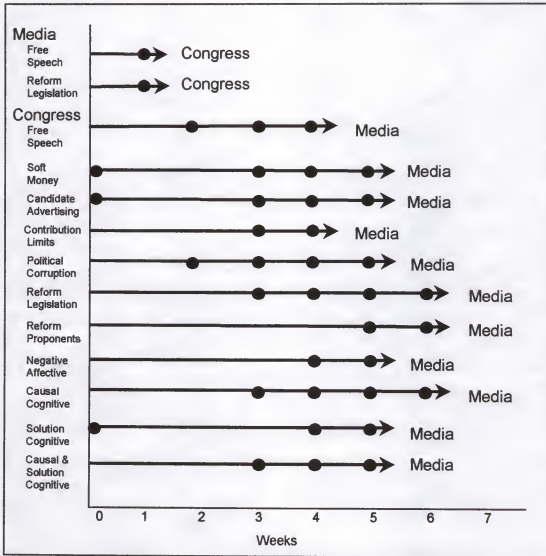


Figure 19: Second Level Agenda Setting Relationships for the Media and Congressional Framing Attributes (● $p < .05$, For example: Line one denotes that the media leads Congress for the free speech frame with .05 significance at a 1 week lag)

Two of the framing attributes (free speech and reform legislation) also suggested an agenda setting effect when the media precede Congress by 1 week. This may indicate a two-way relationship for these sub-issues. The media preceding in the emphasis of the reform legislation frame can be explained as anticipatory coverage of scheduled reform debate in Congress.

The media's influence with respect to the free speech frame is more difficult to interpret. It may simply be a result of the fact that free speech is a sub-issue that is inherently near and dear to the hearts of journalists.

Overall, the findings in this study indicate that the agenda setting process for the campaign reform issue is very complex. A variety of significant effects were noted, but some underlying trends did emerge that lend further insight into agenda setting theory. It would appear that for the first level of agenda setting, public concern regarding campaign reform propels the issue. This influence may be a direct result of the representation of the public agenda by those taking the more active step in discussing their opinions on the Internet.

Results suggest that such an influence persists at the second level of agenda setting, at least with respect to the public agenda leading the media in their choice of attributes. Purely second level analysis of the public influence has yet to be determined, but once the framing attributes are discussed by Congress they have a powerful effect on the attributes utilized by the media.

The agenda setting paradigm can benefit from these results because they offer yet another perspective in the development of a multi-dimensional agenda setting theory. The public is a powerful force on the Internet and this has an affect on the study of traditional as well as second level agenda setting. These findings are surprising in some ways, but refreshing in an age where many perceive the media to be an inappropriately powerful leader in political discourse.

The limitations of this study are predominantly directed at the lack of access to public discourse regarding the campaign reform issue. The choice of on-line discussion messages to represent the public's framing of the issue proved to be problematic. The unavoidable loss of archives due to the database changing hands was beyond the researcher's control, yet it left a hole in the examination of second level agenda setting effects. Future study must incorporate an element of public discourse to make the analysis of this issue complete.

The use of on-line sources to represent the public agenda at any level may be questionable. The databases have yet to be perfected and often produce samples that may not adequately display true public concern with an issue. The Internet represents a more politically active public and that must be considered when analyzing results. The Internet is a new frontier for researchers, but must be utilized with care. Future analysis of Internet sources should strive for maximal control over the research situation.

The current study examined the issue of campaign reform for a one year time period. This in itself can be viewed as a limitation. Many longitudinal studies cover a span of at least 3 to 6 years in an effort to display the ebb and flow of agenda setting relationships. Future research may be needed to expand upon the present findings with the addition of multiple years of analysis. It would be interesting to note the possible changes in agenda setting influence with respect to election year debate on campaign reform. A

major candidate in the 2000 presidential election maintained campaign reform as his dominant platform. This persistent focus reveals a concern with the issue of campaign reform that has become a significant part of the American political climate in recent years. The Senate has currently (April 2001) passed a campaign reform bill that will reach the House of Representatives for debate in July 2001. These events have surely had an impact on the issue and the attention afforded it. A study is needed that can capture more of the Senate discussion regarding the issue. This study failed to do so because of the speech format chosen for analysis.

This analysis focused entirely on one issue in the political climate in order to gain an accurate depiction of that issue on the three agendas. Future study may wish to integrate the examination of multiple issues in order to observe the competition and comparison of each with respect to first and second level agenda setting effects. An analysis of the "issue attention cycles" apparent in the competition among these issues would give insight into their intense struggle for survival on the different American agendas. The study of a variety of issue types is also warranted in order to develop a more accurate theoretical model.

Limitations often arise with the choices made to portray specific agendas. The results can only be applied with accuracy to the sample chosen to represent each agenda. The current study is no exception. It is arguable, for example, that coverage in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*

differs from that in regional publications. We make justifications for these choices, but ultimately each source of analysis varies to some degree. For this reason, future study must continue to investigate new ways to represent each agenda. With each new study, we get closer to understanding the underlying dynamic of agenda setting.

The exploration into second level agenda setting is still relatively new to mass communication research. This is a limiting factor in that former successful techniques are not readily available for replication. The current study looked to past research for the development of a multi-dimensional framing approach. These dimensions, while used before, require highly subjective choices with respect to each new issue. Future directions toward the development of second level agenda setting theory must provide a framework within which to make these choices. The agenda setting of attributes is an area of great intrigue, but with it comes a great need for internal and external consistency.

The power to influence the salience afforded an issue as well as the specific attributes used to discuss that issue is a highly coveted authority. The political arena is especially replete with those who are hopeful to assert their influence with compelling results. This study went to the heart of political campaign reform by examining both first and second level agenda setting effects for the issue. Results suggested that in 1999 the public painted the initial portrait of campaign reform and the image was recognized in earnest by

those in Congress and those in the media. Congress quickly picked up the paintbrush and with detailed strokes affected the specific images relayed to the media. These results both align and depart from past agenda setting research. They are above all enlightening and will hopefully generate numerous threads of inquiry adding yet another layer to the fabric of agenda setting.

APPENDIX A
SAMPLE ARTICLE FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES

4 of 143 DOCUMENTS

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The New York Times

December 17, 1999, Friday, Late Edition - Final

SECTION: Section A; Page 30; Column 1; Editorial Desk

LENGTH: 576 words

HEADLINE: The McCain-Bradley Show

BODY:

The air and even some of the questions in New Hampshire were frosty yesterday at the unusual joint appearance of Senator John McCain of Arizona and former Senator Bill Bradley of New Jersey. But these two presidential candidates were making a significant contribution with their attempt to give the issue of campaign finance reform a more prominent place on the agenda for 2000. This marked the first time that two serious contenders from opposing parties have come together to challenge the Washington establishment on so fundamental a problem as the two parties' joint dependence on special-interest money.

It was especially fitting that Mr. McCain and Mr. Bradley made their appearance, broadcast on ABC's "Nightline" last night, at the exact spot where President Clinton and former House Speaker Newt Gingrich promised to bring about a bipartisan campaign cleanup in 1995. Nothing came of that meeting except for mounting popular disenchantment as detail after detail of the corrupt election of 1996 came to light. It is still fashionable in Washington to think that campaign finance reform is a low priority among voters, as Ted Koppel said repeatedly. But in fact, the issue has propelled both Mr. McCain and Mr. Bradley in New Hampshire, where they are surging ahead because they have made it a centerpiece of their respective campaigns.

As expected, Mr. McCain and Mr. Bradley exchanged promises to bar their parties from spending the unlimited contributions by corporations, unions and rich individuals known as soft money should they face one another in the general election. These donations to the party circumvent longtime limits on campaign donations to the candidates enacted by Congress over many decades, and Mr. McCain said he would forgo soft money no matter whom he faces. Vice President Al Gore has also pledged to forgo soft money in a general election if his opponent does. But Mr. McCain and Mr. Bradley have been most aggressive in promoting a move that would cut off an expected \$500 million in party donations from the nation's most powerful special interests.

Significantly, yesterday's joint appearance by Mr. McCain and Mr. Bradley drew an irate response from George W. Bush. Early in the campaign the Texas governor said he would favor a ban on soft-money donations to political parties by corporations and unions. Lately he has retreated, saying that such a ban would be effective only if it were attached to a harshly anti-labor provision making it difficult for unions to raise campaign money from their members. His position is a dodge, since corporations already give more to campaigns than unions do, by a ratio of more than 10 to 1.

It took some nerve for Mr. McCain to attack his party's front-runner on this issue. Mr. Bush has rejected fund-raising limits and is rapidly becoming the champion money harvester of all time, even compared with Bill Clinton. By defending soft money, Mr. Bush, a self-styled outsider, has truly become the advocate of the Washington fund-raising establishment in this election.

In hard political terms, Mr. Bradley and Mr. McCain were competing yesterday for the independents and crossover voters that both of them need in New Hampshire's open primary. But their meeting has the potential of expanding the base of voters who understand the corrupting influence of special-interest money. They should take their show on the road and invite other candidates to join them.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

APPENDIX B
SAMPLE "MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM" POLLS FOR THE
CAMPAIGN REFORM ISSUE

Poll Questions Regarding Campaign Reform (CR) for 1999

11/1994	Exit poll: Does campaign reform matter in your choice of a candidate?	Yes- 96%
11/1994	Thinking about congress, do you think (campaign finance reform) should be high, low, or not a priority?	High- 45% Low- 36% Not a prior.- 12% Not sure- 7%
8/1995	Who do you feel would do a better job dealing with campaign finance reform?	Rep.- 26% Dem.-26%
10/1995	What one issue would you like to hear pres. candidates talk more about?	CR- 4%
5/1996	Who do you feel would do a better job dealing with campaign finance reform?	Dem.- 20% Rep.- 19% Both- 18%
7/1996	I am going to read a list of issues facing the nation... To what degree is (campaign finance reform) an important issue?	Extremely- 12% Very Imp.- 29% Somewhat- 35%
9/1996	What one issue would you like to hear pres. candidates talk more about?	CR- 3%
10/1996	Which of the following things would you like to see most in the next election?	CR- 25% Less negative campaigning- 35% Higher voter turnout- 23%
10/1996	What do you think is the most important problem for the president to deal with...	CR- 1%
11/1996	I am going to read you a list of issues. Tell me which should be the highest priority for the president?...	CR- 1%
11/1996	What do you think should be the top priority for the next administration?	CR- 1%
1/1997	What do you think are the two most important issues that the federal government should address?	CR- 1%

2/1997	I am going to read you a list of issues. Tell me which should be the highest priority for the president?...	CR- 3%
3/1997	Do you think that you are more likely to see Elvis or to see real campaign finance reform?	See Elvis- 48% See CR- 31%
4/1997	What do you think is the most important problem facing congress?	CR- 2%
4/1997	I am going to read you a list of issues. Tell me how much of a priority (campaign finance reform) should be?	Top- 11% High- 33% Low- 44%
7/1997	What do you think is the most important problem facing congress?	CR- 1%
8/1997	Who do you feel would do a better job dealing with campaign finance reform?	Dem.- 24% Rep.- 36%
9/1997	Regarding political action com: Should the system be changed to reduce the role of big money?	Yes- 78% No- 15%
9/1997	Which of the following is closer to your point of view? CR is needed cause too much \$ in politics... or ...CR not needed b/c \$ contributions should be protected by freedom of speech	Needed- 77% Not needed- 18%
10/1997	Do you agree or disagree that money is equal to free speech?	Agree- 50% Disagree- 37% Not sure- 13%
10/1997	Would you support a candidate more or less if they voted for campaign finance reform?	More- 31% Less- 4%
10/1997	Who do you feel is to blame for the failure to pass campaign reform legislation this year...	Dem.- 22% Rep.- 28% Both- 35%
10/1997	I am going to read you a list of issues. Tell me how much of a priority (campaign finance reform) should be?	Top- 16% High- 32% Low- 39%
10/1997	Who do you feel would do a better job dealing with campaign finance reform?	Rep.- 37% Dem.- 31%
10/1997	How strongly do you feel there is a need for campaign finance reform?	Strong- 44% Somewhat- 24%
1/1998	As pres. Clinton prepares to give the state of the union address, there are many issues facing the nation. I will read a list and tell me if you think it should be a priority for 1999	CR High priority- 45% Low- 52% Not sure- 3%

4/18/98	Who do you feel is to blame for the failure to pass campaign reform legislation this year...	Rep.- 31% Dem.- 18%
6/24/98	Who do you feel would do a better job dealing with campaign finance reform?	Rep.- 32% Dem.- 26% Both- 7% Neither- 15% Don't know- 19%
6/24/98	Which of the following reform do you feel is the most important to address? Fed.tax, healthcare, campaign finance, social sec...	CR- 7%
6/24/98	Which is the second most important?	CR- 10%
6/30/98	Thinking about congress, do you think (campaign finance reform) should be high, low, or not a priority?	High priority- 38% Low priority- 41%
8/6/98	Read a list of issues... Would (campaign finance reform) be an important factor in the way you vote?	Most Imp.- 15% One of many things- 45%
9/10/98	If a candidate voted against campaign finance reform, would you still support that candidate?	Yes- 10%
10/28/98	What do you think are the two most important issues that the federal government should address?	CR- 2%
11/5/98	I am going to read you a list of issues. Tell me how much of a priority (campaign finance reform) should be?	Top- 50% Lower- 34% Not at all- 11% Don't know- 5%
1/1999	Which of the following issues should receive highest priority from congress... economy, campaign finance reform, taxes, moral issues	CR- 3%
1/1999	What do you think are the two most important issues that the federal government should address?	CR- 1%
2/24/99	What do you think are the two most important issues that the federal government should address?	CR- 2%
4/5/99	Which of the following issues should get the highest priority from congress...	CR- 2%
5/19/99	What do you think are the two most important issues that the federal government should address?	CR- 1%

6/4/99	I am going to read a list of issues, tell me if you think a candidate's position on that issue would play a role in your decision to support or not support...	Top priority- 10% High prior.- 14% Very Imp.- 29% Somewhat- 26% Not Imp.- 18% No opinion- 3%
6/29/99	If congress were to pass campaign finance reform legislation, do you think it would make it easier for challengers to defeat incumbents or harder...?	Easier- 43% Harder- 22% No diff.- 20% Don't know-15%
7/13/99	What one issue would you like to hear the presidential candidates talk more about next year?	CR- 1%
9/8/99	What do you think are the two most important issues for our federal government to address?	CR- 1%
9/14/99	If you could recommend one change in our political system, what would it be?	CR- 11% ??
10/23/99	Suppose congress passes campaign finance reform legislation. Do you think their would be a positive effect, no effect, or don't know...	Positive- 43% None- 44% Don't Know
11/4/99	Some people feel so strongly about an issue that they will vote for or against a candidate solely for their stance on that issue. I'll read a list of issues, tell me if you consider any so important that you would vote for or against a candidate solely b/c of stance....	CR- 5%
12/6/99	What do you think are the two most important issues for the federal government to address?	CR- 1%
12/6/99	Regardless of which issues you just named, which of the following issues do you think will be most important to you personally as you make up your mind who to support for the 2000 election?...healthcare, education, social sec., taxes, moral values, economy, foreign policy, environment, or campaign finance reform?	CR- 2%
12/8/99	Candidates are discusses many issues for the upcoming election. I am going to read a list and tell me which you have heard about?	CR Heard of- 61% Haven't- 39%

12/8/99	Which candidate do you most associate with the campaign reform issue?	
12/12/99	What is the single most important issue to you in deciding who to support for prez...education, economy, taxes, social security, campaign reform, world affairs, healthcare, or others?	CR- 1%
12/12/99	Which one of these candidates do you most trust to handle the issue of campaign reform?	Bush- 34% Gore- 24% McCain- 19% Bradley- 14%

APPENDIX C
SAMPLE MESSAGE FROM DEJA.COM SEARCH ENGINE

NOTICE: Deja.com will be offline from 6:30 am - 2:30 pm Central Time on Saturday, February 19 while we upgrade our site. We apologize for the inconvenience.



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Forum: [alt.politics](#)

Thread: [Is Senator McCain a Hypocrite About Campaign Finance Reform?](#)

Message 3 of 1486

Subject: [Is Senator McCain a Hypocrite About Campaign Finance Reform?](#)

Date: 02/07/2000

Author: [Tom Abbott](#) <tabbott@intellex.com>

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The Bush supporters have another theme they are using to try and damage Senator McCain's Presidential **campaign**. Some members of the press have also followed this same twisted logic.

The argument is that if Senator McCain is promoting **campaign finance reform**, then he should not accept ANY **campaign** contributions (or at least this is the implication they leave). Since McCain DOES accept **campaign** contributions, McCain's opponents say he is being hypocritical for accepting money while calling for **campaign finance reform**.

What these people are missing, either inadvertently or deliberately, is that McCain's **finance reform** policy does not call for the elimination of ALL **campaign** contributions, it just calls for more control on existing contributions, and the elimination of some types of contributions like "soft money."

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McCain's **campaign finance reform** would allow each voter to contribute \$1,000 to the candidate of his or her choice, and that would go for those working for corporations and big business, too. All soft money would be eliminated, which is where the opportunity for government corruption is so much greater because of the amounts of money involved.

So McCain's reforms would level the playing field between the average citizen and the fatcat by restricting both to contributions of \$1,000 each. The millions of dollars of soft money the fatcats use to gain an advantage over the private citizen in the "influence arena," would be eliminated. And should be.

So, McCain is not being a hypocrite. He is conforming to the **campaign finance** rules that he is proposing that everyone should follow. He only accepts \$1,000 dollar donations, and that goes for the fatcats and lobbyist who support him, too.

TA

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APPENDIX D
SAMPLE SPEECH FROM CONGRESSIONAL RECORD

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD -- HOUSE

Tuesday, September 28, 1999

106th Congress, 1st Session

145 Cong Rec H 8877

REFERENCE: Vol. 145, No. 128

TITLE: ENFORCE EXISTING CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM LAWS

SPEAKER: Mr. PITTS

TEXT: [*H8877]

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, we have been hearing a lot lately about campaign finance reform. However, some of those pushing for new laws fail to mention the fact that our existing laws have been broken.

It is against the law to use foreign money in election campaigns in America. It is against the law to launder money in election campaigns. It is against the law to sell access to your office or influence or even seats on a foreign trade mission to highest bidders. It is against the law to use public offices, telephones, equipment, staff, computers in election campaigns.

We have heard about "no controlling legal authority." The Attorney General not only fails to enforce our existing laws on campaign finance reform, but the Attorney General blocks efforts to investigate existing laws.

We should have full disclosure, but we should also have our existing laws enforced. It is a scam on the American people to pass new laws on finance reform, while not enforcing existing laws.

SUBJECT: CAMPAIGN FINANCE (93%); CAMPAIGNS & ELECTIONS (90%); LEGISLATION (90%); MONEY LAUNDERING (55%);

LOAD-DATE: 09-29-1

APPENDIX E
CODING SHEETS FOR FRAMING CATEGORIES

Content Analysis of Attributes
Code Book for Media Agenda

GENERAL INFORMATION

(filled out by researcher)

Coded by _____ Date coded _____

Source:

☐ New York Times

☐ Washington Post

Text Identification # Week of text

SUB-ISSUE ATTRIBUTES

Choose and circle one of the following sub-issues to represent the *primary* attribute in the text:

- ☐ **Freedom of speech:** any discussion of money as speech or 1st amendment rights
- ☐ **Soft Money:** discussion regarding unregulated contributions from special interest groups (unions, corporations, etc.)
- ☐ **Candidate advertising:** reference to political advertisements, free commercial time, express advocacy issues
- ☐ **Incumbency Advantage:** reference to incumbent resources and increased access- for example: franking privileges, gerrymandering
- ☐ **Contribution Limits:** discussion regarding limiting campaign contributions & incentives to do so

- <> **Expenditure Limits:** discussion regarding limiting a candidate's campaign expenditures
- <> **Political corruption:** reference to American cynicism with the democratic process
- <> **Legislation:** discussion regarding specific campaign reform legislation or bills before congress- for example: 1971 FECA
- <> **Reform proponents:** reference to specific individuals such as McCain, Feingold, Shays, Meehan
- <> **Other** _____

Do any of the following sub-issues represent *secondary* attributes in the text?(choose as many as apply, but DO NOT choose your *primary* attribute):

- <> **Freedom of speech:** money as speech, 1st amendment right
- <> **Soft Money:** unregulated contributions from special interest groups (unions, corporations, etc.)
- <> **Candidate advertising:** advertising, express advocacy, free airtime
- <> **Incumbency Advantage:** due to franking privileges, gerrymandering, etc.
- <> **Contribution Limits:** regarding limiting amount of contributions, incentives
- <> **Expenditure Limits:** regarding limiting campaign expenditure
- <> **Political corruption:** threat to democracy, pervasive American cynicism
- <> **Legislation:** example-1971 FECA
- <> **Reform proponents:** McCain, Feingold, Shays, Meehan
- Other** _____

FRAMING MECHANISMS

(filled out by researcher)

of words in the article

Choose one of the following to represent the location of the article:

☐ **Front main page** ☐ **Front page/inside section** ☐ **Elsewhere in newspaper**

Check any illustrative elements used in the article:

☐ **Photographs** ☐ **Graphics** ☐ **None**

AFFECTIVE ATTRIBUTESChoose and circle one of the following to represent the tone of the text analyzed:

- ☐ **Negative:** generally engaging in a negative or judgmental tone, hostile or conflictual, using attacks or aggressive language, pessimistic or sarcastic evaluations of the topic and those involved (word examples: corrupt, disgust, frustration, chaotic)
- ☐ **Positive:** generally making judgments in a positive or optimistic tone, stressing fairness and acceptance, presenting views using logical and non-inflammatory language, calm and sensitive demeanor (word examples: agree, change, compromise, helpful, benefit)
- ☐ **Neutral:** The absence of judgment; statements of fact; nonevaluative reports of related events, gatherings, or meetings.
- ☐ **None of the above** _____

COGNITIVE ATTRIBUTES

Do any of the following represent the cognitive structure of the article? (you may choose as many as apply):

- ☐ **Cause:** The article refers to attributions of causal responsibility, identification of who/what is responsible for problematic campaign financing or the absence of meaningful reform.
- ☐ **Solution:** The article mentions the solution to the problem of campaign financing and identifies who/what will remedy the problem.
- ☐ **None of the above** _____

CODER COMMENTS/ IF ANY:

Content Analysis of Attributes
Code Book for Public Agenda

GENERAL INFORMATION

(filled out by researcher)

Coded by _____ Date coded _____

Source:

☒ Internet discussion

Text Identification # Week of text

SUB-ISSUE ATTRIBUTES

Choose and circle one of the following sub-issues to represent the *primary* attribute in the text:

- ☐ **Freedom of speech:** any discussion of money as speech or 1st amendment rights
- ☐ **Soft Money:** discussion regarding unregulated contributions from special interest groups (unions, corporations, etc.)
- ☐ **Candidate advertising:** reference to political advertisements, free commercial time, express advocacy issues
- ☐ **Incumbency Advantage:** reference to incumbent resources and increased access- for example: franking privileges, gerrymandering
- ☐ **Contribution Limits:** discussion regarding limiting campaign contributions & incentives to do so
- ☐ **Expenditure Limits:** discussion regarding limiting a candidate's campaign expenditures
- ☐ **Political corruption:** reference to American cynicism with the democratic process
- ☐ **Legislation:** discussion regarding specific campaign reform legislation or bills before congress- for example: 1971 FECA
- ☐ **Reform proponents:** reference to specific individuals such as McCain, Feingold, Shays, Meehan
- ☐ **Other** _____

Do any of the following sub-issues represent *secondary* attributes in the text?(choose as many as apply, but DO NOT choose your *primary* attribute):

- ☐ **Freedom of speech:** money as speech, 1st amendment right
- ☐ **Soft Money:** unregulated contributions from special interest groups (unions, corporations, etc.)
- ☐ **Candidate advertising:** advertising, express advocacy, free airtime

- ☐ **Incumbency Advantage:** due to franking privileges, gerrymandering, etc.
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- ☐ **Expenditure Limits:** regarding limiting campaign expenditures
- ☐ **Political corruption:** threat to democracy, pervasive American cynicism
- ☐ **Legislation:** example-1971 FECA
- ☐ **Reform proponents:** McCain, Feingold, Shays, Meehan
- Other** _____

FRAMING MECHANISMS

(filled out by researcher)

of words in the message

of quote references

AFFECTIVE ATTRIBUTES

Choose and circle one of the following to represent the tone of the text analyzed:

- ☐ **Negative:** generally engaging in a negative or judgmental tone, hostile or conflictual, using attacks or aggressive language, pessimistic or sarcastic evaluations of the topic and those involved (word examples: corrupt, disgust, frustration, chaotic)
- ☐ **Positive:** generally making judgments in a positive or optimistic tone, stressing fairness and acceptance, presenting views using logical and non-inflammatory language, calm and sensitive demeanor (word examples: agree, change, compromise, helpful, benefit)

☐ **Neutral:** The absence of judgment; statements of fact; nonevaluative reports of related events, gatherings, or meetings.

☐ **None of the above** _____

COGNITIVE ATTRIBUTES

Do any of the following represent the cognitive structure of the message (you may choose as many as apply):

☐ **Cause:** The article refers to attributions of causal responsibility, identification of who/what is responsible for problematic campaign financing or the absence of meaningful reform.

☐ **Solution:** The article mentions the solution to the problem of campaign financing and identifies who/what will remedy the problem.

☐ **None of the above** _____

CODER COMMENTS/ IF ANY:

Content Analysis of Attributes
Code Book for Congressional Agenda

GENERAL INFORMATION

(filled out by researcher)

Coded by _____ Date coded _____

Source:

☐ **House**

☐ **Senate**

Text Identification # Week of text

SUB-ISSUE ATTRIBUTES

Choose and circle one of the following sub-issues to represent the *primary* attribute in the text:

- ☐ **Freedom of speech:** any discussion of money as speech or 1st amendment rights
- ☐ **Soft Money:** discussion regarding unregulated contributions from special interest groups (unions, corporations, etc.)
- ☐ **Candidate advertising:** reference to political advertisements, free commercial time, express advocacy issues
- ☐ **Incumbency Advantage:** reference to incumbent resources and increased access- for example: franking privileges, gerrymandering
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- ☐ **Other** _____

Do any of the following sub-issues represent *secondary* attributes in the text?(choose as many as apply, but DO NOT choose your *primary* attribute):

- ☐ **Freedom of speech:** money as speech, 1st amendment right
- ☐ **Soft Money:** unregulated contributions from special interest groups (unions, corporations, etc.)
- ☐ **Candidate advertising:** advertising, express advocacy, free airtime

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- <> **Expenditure Limits:** regarding limiting campaign expenditures
- <> **Political corruption:** threat to democracy, pervasive American cynicism
- <> **Legislation:** example-1971 FECA
- <> **Reform proponents:** McCain, Feingold, Shays, Meehan
- Other _____

FRAMING MECHANISMS

(filled out by researcher)

of words in the speech

Who is the speaker? _____

<1> Democrat

<2> Independent

<3> Republican

AFFECTIVE ATTRIBUTES

Choose and circle one of the following to represent the tone of the text analyzed:

- <> **Negative:** generally engaging in a negative or judgmental tone, hostile or conflictual, using attacks or aggressive language, pessimistic or sarcastic evaluations of the topic and those involved (word examples: corrupt, disgust, frustration, chaotic)

- <> **Positive:** generally making judgments in a positive or optimistic tone, stressing fairness and acceptance, presenting views using logical and non-inflammatory language, calm and sensitive demeanor (word examples: agree, change, compromise, helpful, benefit)
- <> **Neutral:** The absence of judgment; statements of fact; nonevaluative reports of related events, gatherings, or meetings.
- <> **None of the above** _____

COGNITIVE ATTRIBUTES

Do any of the following represent the cognitive structure of the speech (you may choose as many as apply):

- <> **Cause:** The article refers to attributions of causal responsibility, identification of who/what is responsible for problematic campaign financing or the absence of meaningful reform.
- <> **Solution:** The article mentions the solution to the problem of campaign financing and identifies who/what will remedy the problem.
- <> **None of the above** _____

CODER COMMENTS/ IF ANY:

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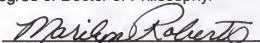
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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

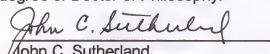
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I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



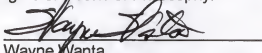
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I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



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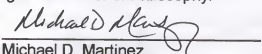
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Associate Professor of Journalism and
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I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



Leonard Tipton
Professor of Journalism and
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I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



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